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The Week

IT IS good news that the government is going seriously to work at a long-time policy of land-planning. Whatever agricultural policy is adopted: whether we are in the future to export more or less, whether crop restrictions or crop expansion is to be the ultimate need, it is nevertheless important that the best land be used for the crops for which it is suited, and that crop-farming on submarginal land be abandoned in favor of other uses, such as forestry, recreation, or perhaps grazing. According to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Tugwell, speaking before the learned societies in Philadelphia, preparations are now being made to take out of cultivation 50 million submarginal acres. The cost of this operation is estimated at $350 million, mainly for buying the land and adding it to the public domain. A start will be made with a fund of $50 million, perhaps to be spent by the Surplus Relief Corporation. The families now striving to eke out a living on this poor soil of course constitute an immediate problem, but, in the long run, they could scarcely be worse off in any place other than where they are. The immediate suggestion is to move them to better land on condition that they grow nothing except for their own use, and to provide them with cash incomes by part-time work on C.W.A. projects. We hope that they will be settled in carefully planned colonies. It would be even better if the purchasing power of the city population could eventually rise enough so that they might grow crops for consumption by others as well as by themselves.

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES, in his open letter to President Roosevelt written for the American press, adopts substantially the same attitude toward the President's monetary policy which has been taken by The New Republic. Because Mr. Keynes has urged a managed currency, many uninformed commentators have supposed that he agreed with Professor Warren, but this is not the case. He does not believe in the simple quantity theory of money. He is not in favor of depreciating the exchange in an effort to raise internal prices, and he does not think there is any close or automatic relationship between the price of gold and the prices of commodities. Rising prices are no good if accompanied by restricted output. Rather he favors stimulating activity by an enlarged program of governmental expenditures—something Roosevelt in his first year has failed to do. If this results in a rise in internal prices, the exchange control may then be used to prevent international influences from beating them down. Mr. Keynes is against artificial depreciation of exchange, and he is also against going back to the gold standard, but he believes that the President should announce that he will not change the gold price of the dollar except to support an internal price level already achieved by other means. Management of the external price of the dollar should be auxiliary rather than primary. Mr. Keynes also stresses the importance of a lower rate of interest for long-term investments, to stimulate new borrowing for capital expenditures. To do this it would be helpful to refund the federal debt, cutting the rate perhaps to 2.5 percent.

WE INVITE our readers' thoughtful attention to the article, "Harvey and Charlie," which appears on page 241 of this issue. Although the facts there presented were developed in the course of a public hearing before the Senate Banking Committee, for

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one reason or another they received extremely scant consideration in the daily press. These facts, in our opinion, justify several important conclusions—conclusions which in general will not be new to readers of The New Republic:

1. Adequate banking reform, it is now clear, will come only from the government and not from within banking circles themselves. Even the "reforming bankers" are so timorous or uninformed or opportunist, or all three, that their leader, Winthrop W. Aldrich of the Chase Bank, was shown by the inquiry to have stopped halfway in his own housecleaning. The banker whom he kept as his chief aide had not only been the chief aide of Wiggin but was in many respects a little Wiggin himself.

2. It is now clear that the Senate Banking Committee will not complete its job unless it deals firmly with the malodorous career of the government bank, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The Committee has moved once or twice timidly in that direction; but beyond some brilliant personal work by Mr. Ferdinand Pecora, little has resulted except a general suspicion—which may or may not be justified—that the Committee itself is dominated by political motives in its gentle dealing with the R.F.C.

3. It is incumbent on President Roosevelt to do more than merely ask Congress, as he plans to do this month, to extend the active life of the R.F.C. beyond its present two-year limit. It was one thing for Mr. Hoover to seek to bind the Democrats to his plans by putting in important posts such men as Jesse Jones, constituent of Speaker Garner, and Harvey Couch, constituent of Senate Democratic Leader Robinson. It is an entirely different thing for President Roosevelt, entertaining ideas wholly different from those of Jones, Couch and their Wall Street and other banking associates, to permit such men even to sit on the R.F.C.'s board, still less to dominate it. The President did well when he put former Senator Blaine into the R.F.C.; but Mr. Blaine has been swamped in routine and Jones and Couch continue to make policy and to hamstring the President's plans at every turn. They should be replaced by able liberals who will undertake a thorough housecleaning. The President's friends in the Senate could do him no better service than to advise him that when the life of the R.F.C. is extended, it should be on Roosevelt lines and not on those of Hoover.

WHOM the Gods would destroy, they first make mad." Recent action by the New York banking community suggests that the gentlemen who control the financial institutions of the metropolis, whether on account of overwork or because recent public criticism has caused them to lose all sense of values, may have begun to run amuck. They proposed to put into effect a regional code under the N.R.A. which would have made it prohibitively expensive for the average small depositor to maintain a checking account at all. He would have been buried under a series of petty charges on his account, which in the aggregate would have mounted to a serious annual sum. Indeed, about the only thing the banks overlooked was a subway turnstile in the doorway, with a charge of five cents to come in and ten cents to go out. The roars of protest from the enraged populace were so loud and strong that General Johnson himself was forced to cancel the local code for thirty days, while the bankers resorted to the feeble and false assertion that they thought the government had ordered them to make all these nuisance-charges.

IT IS interesting to note that almost the only New York banks which from the beginning showed a common-sense realization of the situation were those of labor unions and of Harlem Negroes. In the group meetings of New York County bankers, the two labor-union banks, the Amalgamated and the Federation, and a Negro bank, the Dunbar National, with one other small institution, stood alone, and bitterly opposed the proposals of the "great financiers," warned them what these proposals would mean to the average depositor and emphasized the unpleasant truth that a bank which was not burdened with a gold-plated front and marble fixtures could do business at a profit without imposing these outrageous charges. The whole incident is one more bit of evidence that we shall not get a New Deal in banking until we get new bankers, and that we probably shall not get the right kind of bankers until the business is conducted by the government or by groups, like those referred to, which are willing to subordinate or eliminate the profit motive.

THE long delayed announcement of the second Five Year Plan of the Soviet Union reveals that it is just as ambitious as the first, and that it contemplates increasing industrial production 240 percent before January, 1938. It is no surprise that the outstanding new feature of this plan is a great increase in consumers' goods which will make possible a rapid gain in the standard of living. More than half of the additions to the production program consist of goods for individual consumption. It is expected that real wages will be doubled during the period. The cultural elements of a rising standard have not been overlooked—in education, for instance, the plan is to increase the number of students from 24,200,000 as at present, to 36,000,000. There is also an important aim to bridge the gap between peasant and town worker by reform in the social and labor conditions in the country. The first Five Year Plan emphasized the rigors of beginning to build a socialist state; this plan can, as a result, pay more attention to socialist objectives in increased material welfare. Nevertheless, the heavy industries have not been overlooked; their growth is to go on at about the same rate as before. About half the new investment in transportation and heavy industry will be made east of the Urals, thus building up a new industrial region and making the Soviet Union virtually impregnable against outside attacks—whether from the West or from the East.

THE murder of Archbishop Leon Tourian before the altar of the Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic

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Church in New York City was a crime picturesque enough to receive headlines in the daily press. There is, however, a long story behind the murder which the newspapers failed to reveal. The Archbishop was killed, it is said, by members of a society known as Tashnak—what does the name signify? It is, in reality, the name chosen by the Armenian Revolutionary party, which, after the World War, took over the government of that section of Armenia which had been ruled by the Tsars. The Tashnaks were kept in power by British imperialism, chiefly as a bulwark against the rising Soviets in Russia. They ruled the country for two and a half years, during which time they involved the impoverished and decimated Armenian people in continual warfare with their neighbors, the Georgians, the Azerbaijans and the Turks, in the hope of gaining more territory. Instead, they lost much of the territory already in their hands, along with hundreds of thousands of their people. Finally the Armenians, realizing that the Tashnaks were bringing them neither bread nor independence, but hunger and death, overthrew them and established their own soviet. The Tashnaks decamped with the national treasury, and set out to organize a counter-revolutionary movement in the Armenian colonies of Syria, Greece, France and, later, of Egypt and the Argentine. In all these countries they have been carrying on a policy of terrorism, assassinating workers, giving beatings to Armenian intellectuals, kidnaping and shaving off the beards of priests who expressed sympathy toward the Soviet government. Archbishop Tourian was one of the Armenian prelates who did not conceal a fact long visible to the majority of his compatriots—namely, that the Armenian people are more prosperous under a soviet government than they have been for centuries. Such a statement, coming from the head of the Armenian church in America, could not be tolerated by the Tashnaks; the Archbishop had to be killed.

BUT this is only part of the story. Official documents exist to prove that since the Tashnaks were exiled, they have courted and established bonds of brotherhood with their former enemies, the exiled reactionaries of Georgia and Azerbaijan, with the high hope of freeing their respective countries from the hands of their common enemy, the Soviets. At first these representatives of the minority peoples in the Soviet Union stood apart from the Russian White Guards, whose ambition was to unite the former Russian empire under an autocratic government, and thus to continue the Tsar's policy toward the smaller nations. But the progress of the Soviet Union convinced its enemies that they must unite: for the last two years the White Guard Russians have been making common cause with the Ukrainians, Armenians and other exiled nationalists. Sir Henri Deterding, Lord Rothermere and, more recently, Hitler, were instrumental in forging this unity of the Soviet enemies. In October, 1933, an all-Russian Fascist Council met in Berlin, and the national policy of the movement was finally formulated. It took all the pressure of the Deterding and Hitler representatives, however, to procure from the White Guard Russians promises of independence for the minor nationalities. At this meeting, the Russian Fascists determined to redouble their "activities"—a polite name for political kidnapings and assassinations like that of Archbishop Tourian. Thus, in order to explain a murder in New York City, we are led back to Armenia in 1917, and are led forward toward considering a movement that is doing its best to provoke a new world war.

Recovery or Reform?

THERE is a formula repeated frequently nowadays by persons who oppose some of the more drastic tendencies which conservatives think they see in administration policies. It is that there are two separate and distinct lines of policy, one of which aims to bring recovery without much modification of the economic structure, the other of which aims at permanent reforms or even at changes so great that they would amount to revolution. According to this formula, those who seek reform are obstructing recovery. They are doing things, some of which, perhaps, ought to be done at some indefinite future time, but which ought not to be done now because they prevent the growth of business revival. Such minor reforms as may be made now without much disturbance may be all right, but on the whole, so the argument goes, we ought to concentrate on recovery rather than on reform until we are out of the woods.

Examples of this argument pop up on every side. The government ought not to attempt to regulate the issuance of securities, or to control the stock market, or to do much to the banking system, because these changes interfere with the activity of the capital markets, which is necessary for a revival of the heavy industries. Or the government ought not to raise wages or do anything to hold down prices, because such action blows an icy wind on the tender sprouts of the business profit motive, just appearing out of the frozen ground. Or Assistant Secretary Tugwell, in supporting a law which will prevent the poisoning and cheating of buyers of drugs and foods, really wants to destroy private enterprise altogether, which cannot prosper if it is regulated and has to tell the truth.

For the sake of argument, let us grant for the moment that this distinction between reform and recovery is completely valid, and that it would be better now to seek recovery. By disturbing no institution or practice that led us up the curve last time, we arrive again at 1928—at 1929. And then again we go over the precipice. It might not be so hard a fall next time. Of course, there is a chance of that. But then again, it might be harder. No responsible thinker of any school believes that, in a

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business order, it will be possible to go up the curve without sliding down again—unless something or other is done to change the customary way of conducting economic affairs. Is this repetition of history what we want? Was this the mandate given the present administration?

The more intelligent critics admit that some sort of reform is ultimately necessary. But, they say, let us wait until a more propitious moment. Let us make sure of our recovery first, and then, when we are prosperous, let us eliminate the abuses. Surely this is an absurd proposal for any intelligent man to make. Does he seriously believe that such a program is politically possible? If and when business men and bankers are all making money, and the rest of the population is looking forward to easy wealth, will it be possible to persuade Congress to install the necessary controls, or business to accept them? We never mend the roof when it is not raining. Furthermore, there is a strong probability that even if controls could be introduced at the top of the cycle, they would be too late. They would serve only to dramatize the elements of economic instability which had already developed. Omitting all political considerations, the time to begin to prevent a depression is during the preceding recovery.

But we do not admit that the distinction between reform policies and recovery policies is valid anyway. There are, to be sure, emergency actions, taken because more permanent measures cannot easily be improvised, which it would not be wise to continue indefinitely. One hopes, for instance, that it will eventually be possible to stop granting relief to the unemployed—by employing them. But the way toward recovery, as distinguished from permanent changes in our economic system, is not so clear and obvious that it would be possible for anybody to frame a successful recovery program which contained no elements of fundamental alteration.

Professor Sprague, for instance, one of the most cogent critics of the administration, has pointed out that business and financial interests which wish to continue the old order are reluctant to take the steps which would have to be taken so that it might work in the old way. On the one hand, they object to inflation, to "artificial" measures of raising the prices of farm crops and wages. They are perfectly willing to allow the farmer and the wage earner to be deflated to the limit. On the other hand, they resist to the limit the deflation of funded debt and of capital structures, which form such a large element in the costs of what farmers and wage earners buy. They try to keep up the prices of manufactured goods by restricting their output. Thus they perpetuate until the last gasp the disparity between farm prices and industrial prices, between popular purchasing power and the value of the goods which industry might produce, a disparity which is recognized by all theorists as a prime cause of the continuance of depression.

If we were to get revival by the deflation route, there would first have to be far more severe shocks to financial confidence than have yet occurred. So many elements of rigidity and control have already been built into our order—control in many cases not by government, but by private enterprise—that it cannot flexibly readjust itself as conservative theory demands that it must. Drastic and fundamental reform indeed would be necessary in order to make it work smoothly as economists in the past have contended that it ought to work. We should have to compel a return to small units of production, to a truly competitive system. We are now stuck in a dead-center between the old laissez-faire and collectivism. Fundamental reform is necessary to go back as well as to go forward. To remain where we are is not to invite recovery.

In order to be completely logical, the advocates of recovery without reform would have to oppose any governmental aid to distressed railroads, banks and insurance companies. They would have to urge the government to stand by idly while great industrial corporations followed one another into receivership. They would have to be willing to permit the vanishing of a large proportion of the remaining capital values of the nation, including the savings of small holders. They would want the government to invite all the turmoil and confusion and distress which would accompany the destruction of what had been built on such insecure foundations during the last period of prosperity. And they would have to have confidence that somehow, out of this wreckage, the old process of accumulating wealth would start all over again. Theoretically this is possible, but it is not a prospect which the supporters of the old order could contemplate with any feeling of confidence and security.

But when government interference is called for to save capital structures and moderate the extremes of deflation and unemployment, much more than this must be done if there is to be even the slightest prospect of recovery. The most immediate dangers to recovery arise from the very chance that government will do what business and financial interests want it to do, without doing much else. Though it lends huge amounts to distressed private enterprises, these enterprises cannot long be saved unless popular purchasing power increases. Though it permits private industries through codes to outlaw cut-throat competition, popular purchasing power will not be increased unless it also controls wages and prices in such a way that the earnings of labor may gain on the market values of what labor has to buy, and output may be increased. The only chance to restore a market for private investment is to obtain some modicum of honesty and responsibility in the issuance of securities and the conduct of financial institutions. Many of the government's reform measures may be unwise, but not because they are aimed at reform. The real question is whether we can get stable recovery without engaging in much more reform than has yet been at-

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tempted. If business will not revive in the face of measures now undertaken, the only logical answer is for more drastic reform, which will make us less dependent on private pecuniary initiative.

Uncle Sam as Good Neighbor

MR. ROOSEVELT last week made a speech about foreign policy which had one startling result. It dealt in part with our Latin American policy; and so dramatic was its character that it at once pushed the recently concluded Pan-American Conference far into the background. Indeed, a major mystery about this part of the speech is why the President did not make his announcement in advance of the conference instead of after its close. To some extent it constituted an important alteration of the policy pursued by the American delegation—a policy which presumably must have been ordered by him. This question, however, is sure to be ignored in the general satisfaction which the speech has produced in Latin America.

Since the President's speech (delivered at a Woodrow Wilson memorial dinner) dealt with two distinct subjects, it is necessary to discuss these separately.

I. The Proposal for World Peace

Mr. Roosevelt took this occasion to repeat his warning and proposal to the Great Powers, made last spring. He again urged upon the world the gradual elimination of offensive armaments, and offered once more the plan under which all nations would pledge themselves never, no matter what the provocation, to send armed forces into the territory of another power. He recognized (at least by implication) that in the past treaties to keep the peace have been broken about as readily as they have been signed. He believes, however, that it would be desirable for a majority of the powers to subscribe to such an agreement, with the proviso that it would not go into effect until it was unanimous, and then let the pressure of world opinion operate upon those governments which refused to sign.

The same criticism can be made of Mr. Roosevelt's plan that has been leveled against all previous, similar ones. Peace pacts are of no value unless the powers which sign them intend to live up to them. The one way to have peace is not to want war. The elimination of offensive weapons would, if obeyed, perhaps make the opening stages of a new war more difficult, less mortal, for a short time; but once hostilities had begun, all rules would speedily be abandoned. The President's definition of aggression as armed invasion is a good one (first put forward, incidentally, by Soviet Russia); but what the world needs is not definitions of aggression but ways to prevent it.

Practically, of course, the President's suggestion came to nothing last spring and will come to nothing now. Most of the Great Powers have already seized upon it as supporting their present policies, whatever these may be. The British see in it support of their own mildly anti-Hitler attitude, since they assume that by referring to "10 percent of the world's population" which is not satisfied with the *status quo*, the President meant Germany. The Germans insist that he gave approval to their plans for rearming, which they say are of a purely "defensive" character. The French like his praise for the League of Nations. But almost nowhere does one get in the response of public officials any burning sense of the terrible danger of war, any firm resolve to prevent it at whatever cost. Most Europeans today accept fatalistically the idea that another war is inevitable and the only important thing is to try to be on the winning side. Mr. Roosevelt's proposals are like a temperance sermon directed toward a drunkard who has already reached for the bottle. Over and over again, one gets from Europe the argument that it is now hopeless to expect the Great Powers to make peace through their own unaided efforts, and that the United States must intervene actively in the present quarrel. But the Europeans overlook what seem, from this side of the Atlantic, to be the obvious facts: that the only permanent peace is one arranged by the conflicting nations themselves, that the United States has not the power even if it had the will to resolve Eurasia's difficulties, and that the American people are at present so overwhelmingly opposed to further direct interference in the affairs of the Old World that no American government would dare to propose such interference.

II. Good Neighbors in this Hemisphere

In the same address, Mr. Roosevelt threw overboard those remnants of the old Monroe Doctrine which still remain; and if his government can now be persuaded to practise what he preaches, a new day has indeed dawned in our relations with the rest of the Western Hemisphere. He made a flat statement that "the definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention." If law and order are not being maintained in any country, that is first of all the concern of the people of that country. If conditions become intolerable and the local government is helpless to remedy them, the situation becomes a matter of concern to the whole continent. If this means anything, it is that the Monroe Doctrine is no longer a unilateral policy of the United States. It is now the basis for something approaching a Pan-American League of Nations. We have many times in the past talked about coöperation with the American powers, and numerous documents have been brought forward which were supposed to work toward that end. These efforts have never amounted to anything, since there was a well founded belief that, in the last analysis, the United States did not purpose to live up to them. The chief reason for

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taking the suggestion more seriously this time is that previous acts of the Roosevelt administration have pointed in the same direction. There is no doubt that the old game of financial and economic imperialism in the Caribbean is done for. We are still cursed with the illegitimate children of some of these adventures—in Haiti and Cuba in particular; and the process of rectifying matters is going on with painful slowness. Nevertheless, no one can doubt that we have actually turned a corner. We have discovered that in the long run our Latin neighbors are worth more to us as customers for our goods than as slaves of our finance, and that we can't have them as both.

As we have already suggested, it is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Roosevelt did not choose to make his declaration just before the Seventh Pan-American Conference opened rather than just after it closed. He could have enormously lightened the atmosphere in which our delegation worked. In view of the general feeling of the Latin powers toward ourselves, the wonder is, not that the conference accomplished so little, but that it did anything at all.

The record of achievements includes some general statements favoring reciprocal trade agreements, a disapproval of trade barriers and emphasis on the principle of most-favored-nation treatment. It also includes efforts by the Conference, by a special committee of the League of Nations, and by Secretary Hull personally, to bring to an end the war between Bolivia and Paraguay. A treaty was signed calling for equal nationality rights for women (on which the United States completely reversed its position), and there was a recommendation that women should have equal civil and political rights as well. The policy of interference by one country in the internal affairs of another was opposed, the United States making reservations in regard to certain aspects of this question, which Mr. Roosevelt's speech has shown to be needless. Various anti-war agreements which have been signed by some of the countries participating in the Conference were recommended for general signature. Encouragement was offered regarding intellectual coöperation, always so much more important to the Latin than to the Yankee. Secretary Hull, it is generally reported, made a striking personal success, and this, no doubt, will be reflected in the future in improved cordiality among the nations.

It is now clear that the success of the efforts to end the Paraguayan-Bolivian war was greatly overestimated at first. While a truce was achieved, there is no guarantee that it will not be followed by a resumption of hostilities. Far more important than all the efforts of third parties to settle the dispute is the fact that a Paraguayan General, Estigarribia, inflicted a stunning defeat on the Bolivians, capturing 14,000 men, about one-third of the entire front-line army. If peace comes, it will be on a basis of that victory and not because the spirit of sweet reasonableness at last hovers over the Chaco.

As for the question of trade, it is probable that Mr. Hull is a good deal more optimistic than the facts justify. He suggests that Latin America is about to swing back into the orbit of the United States, largely because of difficulties created for export trade by the British system of imperial preference and the similar plan between France and her colonies. As to this, however, President Roosevelt has the last word. As everyone knows, there is a strong vein of economic nationalism running through his policies, and he does not hesitate to throw overboard important items of foreign trade if he feels that our domestic situation is improved thereby. There are some South American exports, like Brazilian coffee, which do not conflict with our domestic products; but there are many others which do, and any important increase in exports to us would almost certainly have to come in the second group, not the first.

Correspondents at the Pan-American Conference have made again the discovery, customary at all these conferences, that there is no "Latin American bloc" *vis-a-vis* the United States. Instead, each of the Latin countries stands by itself. They want different things from us and from each other and not one of them is prepared to undergo any serious inconvenience to defend the cause of a weaker sister nation, which is, or is supposed to be, under the heel of "the giant of the North." The United States, of course, dominates all Latin American conferences. It plays the role there which is played by Great Britain in conferences of the British Commonwealth of Nations. But aside from this, the big countries of Latin America are quite as ruthless as ourselves in riding roughshod over the little ones, if and when their self-interest seems to demand it. One of the important benefits from the new Roosevelt policy, if and when this goes into effect, should be to dispel the idea that we are the only villain in the piece, and that all Latin American countries are identical in virtue. If they are no longer able to divert all attention to "the Yankee ogre," we may get a much more accurate picture of varying shades of international morality in the lands of the South.

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Harvey and Charlie

Two Home-Town Boys from Arkansas

HARVEY COUCH and Charlie McCain, the Arkansas home-town boys who made good in the big cities, took the Washington spotlight a few weeks ago. The occasion was the last day of the investigation into the Chase National Bank of New York. The place was the hearing room of the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency. The purpose was to learn how big banks are run. The by-product was the success story of Harvey and Charlie.

The two boys started out in the traditional American manner. Couch was clerk in a drug store when he was twenty. McCain got into a bank when he was fifteen. Not many years later Couch had organized and had become the head of power and light companies in Arkansas and Louisiana. McCain became the head of a bank in Little Rock. Couch and McCain became promoters of railway consolidation. They went on the boards of trunk-line railways. They formed important Wall Street connections. And at long last Couch became one of the two top men in the government's biggest bank, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and McCain became one of the two top men in Wall Street's biggest bank, the Chase National.

The two boyhood and business friends bear charmed lives. In January and February, 1932, when Herbert Hoover was frantically telling Congress that it must create the kind of Reconstruction Finance Corporation that he favored, he brought Harvey Couch to Washington to help save the country. Couch was on the board of the R.F.C. from the date of its organization. He sat in at sessions when wasteful or political loans were being made, including the memorable loan of $90 million to the bank of that other Charlie, Mr. Dawes of Chicago. Ace-high with Hoover, knee-deep in the R.F.C. scandals of the Hoover period, Couch was able to emerge unscathed and continue in a position of power and responsibility.

Of McCain a similar story must be told. He was at the Chase National Bank, right next to Albert H. Wiggin. He was there in the years when affiliates of the bank engaged in stock-market speculation, when Wiggin's family corporations got big cut-ins on the business of the bank's affiliates, and when Chase National was obliged to set up reserves for losses of approximately $300 million—among the most stupendous in banking history.

In 1933, Winthrop W. Aldrich, brother-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the biggest stockholder of the Chase Bank, took command, ousted Wiggin, but retained McCain for his principal lieutenant. McCain is chairman of the board of directors under the reform administration of Aldrich. The avowed policy and headship of the bank have changed, but McCain remains.

Couch and McCain, taken individually, are not the two greatest men in the banking world. But taken together, they constitute a very powerful combination—more powerful than any single man in Wall Street, and more powerful than any single man in government finance. They are separated by 226 miles of railroad, but they have been close friends and business associates for decades. They can use the long-distance telephone; they can write letters. The hearings before the Senate Committee disclosed how warmly these two friends feel toward each other, and how closely they have worked together on government and Wall Street business. Because of their power, it is essential for the safety of the country that it should know what manner of men these are.

Couch and McCain are something more than bankers. They are promoters, syndicate operators, big figures in large-scale commerce, transportation, industry and finance. A few years ago they organized a ten-million-dollar syndicate to consolidate railways in Arkansas and Louisiana. The method of handling this consolidation was regarded by Ferdinand Pecora, attorney of the Senate Banking Committee, as revealing plainly the standards of these great men.

Pecora quoted from remarks of Commissioner Joseph B. Eastman, present Federal Coördinator of Railroads. Eastman, in a partially dissenting opinion, called attention to one of the things that the Couch-McCain group did. They wanted to have a consolidated railway with corporate powers they could not get under the law of Arkansas and perhaps that of Louisiana, the two states within whose borders the railway company was to operate. Eastman said that "the promoters have gone to little Delaware, many hundreds of miles away, and have secured a charter, which . . . permits the new Louisiana and Arkansas [the consolidated railway company] not only to do all that its promoters now have in mind, but practically anything else if occasion arises in the future, in all states *except Delaware*. . . . There is no valid reason for such charters and they are inconsistent with sound public policy." After Pecora had read these words, McCain, who was on the witness stand, said, "I am sure the corporation would not do anything and did not do anything that made Delaware ashamed. . . ." Pecora added the comment that "apparently Delaware was not taking any chances of having any of those things done within its own

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borders," and the faithful reporter of the Senate Committee made the notation that "the witness simply smiled."

Couch and McCain were a good deal more than old-style promoters. They were also more than old-style bankers. They knew how to borrow from their own bank. McCain was second-in-command to Wiggin; Couch also was a member of the board of directors of the Chase National Bank. Couch, McCain and others, as syndicate managers, had a loan of several million dollars at the Chase Bank. The collateral to secure this loan consisted of the Louisiana and Arkansas stock, which is not listed on any exchange and has no true market. The difficulty which a bank might find with the use of such collateral is indicated by McCain's admission that "it would have to be an arbitrary valuation that you would fix on it." The syndicate organized by these bankers still owed their bank over one and a quarter million dollars at the time of McCain's testimony a few weeks ago—four years after they got the Chase to take over the loan in a merger with another bank headed by McCain.

Couch and McCain were such big operators that they were unable to content themselves with the management of syndicates and with syndicate loans. They got large loans for themselves as individuals, not only at their own bank but elsewhere. At the same time that they had loans at the Chase, they had a loan of over $600,000 at the Chemical National Bank of New York. With the Chemical, however, they had to deal on a proper basis; and they gave that bank sound securities listed on the New York Stock Exchange, and therefore readily salable by the lending bank should the borrowers be unable to pay the loan. In contrast to this method of dealing with a bank that is independent of any control by the borrower, is McCain's policy with his own bank. He gave it, as collateral for his individual loan, securities which were unlisted and of such local character that a lending bank would have great difficulty in realizing its security in the event of non-payment. McCain followed this contrasting policy throughout. He paid off his loan at the Chemical Bank. His loan at the Chase was still unpaid as recently as a few weeks ago when he was on the witness stand in Washington. So far did he go in using his own bank in an unbusiness-like way for his personal needs that he borrowed from the Chase in order to pay the Chemical. He was still indebted to the Chase in the amount of $226,000 at the time he gave testimony. Far from paying his loan in full, as he did at the Chemical Bank, he reduced his indebtedness at the Chase during the year 1933 (up to December, when he testified) in the amount of $3,500. At this rate, McCain would be able to make the last payment when he gets to be 113 years of age. The annual salary he was getting from his bank was approximately $128,000, at the time he was paying it $3,500 a year on his loan. Indeed, so well has he been treated by his bank that his salary in 1933 was bigger than in the boom year of 1929. It would be interesting to peer into the minds of Mr. Aldrich and the other directors of the Chase National Bank to get the reasons for such treatment of an officer during whose regime the bank and its affiliates were obliged to write off $300 million for losses. It may be interesting, also, for the officers of the thousands of failed and crippled banks to know that under the standard set by the biggest commercial banking institution in the country, they themselves should constitute a favored salaried class.

At the same time that Bank President McCain was borrowing from the Chase, Bank Director Couch was also borrowing. He kept putting up collateral, but the loan constantly got "under water." The bank examiners criticized the transaction. Every time the discount committee of the bank considered the loans that were in bad shape, Couch's was right up in front. But Charlie McCain was there, and so the subject was always referred to Charlie. Finally, as the Senate investigations revealed, Charlie went away on a vacation, and some of the other officers mustered enough courage to have a letter sent to Couch urging him to do something to put his loan in order. The matter was at last disposed of with the help of his friend Charlie. Charlie borrowed some more money from the Chase Bank, paid some of it to Couch, and Couch in that way reduced his loan. To get this loan, McCain explained to his fellow officials that if the bank would lend him some money, it would benefit in its relations with Director Couch. This explanation appears on the minutes of the executive committee of the bank. The minutes do not show, however, that more than half of the increased loan that McCain got from his own bank in this manner was used, not to deliver to Couch for the purpose of reducing his obligation at the Chase, but to cut down the joint loan of McCain and Couch at the Chemical Bank.

The two boys from Arkansas were not content with being promoters, syndicate managers, operators and bank directors or officers. They also organized an investment trust. Harvey Couch was in charge of it. At the suggestion of McCain, Couch wrote to Albert H. Wiggin, the head of the Chase Bank, and gave Wiggin a participation in this investment trust. At the time, the investment trust had already made a profit and its stock was worth more than at the beginning of the operation. But Couch wrote to Wiggin, "We are glad to include you on this. . . . This comes to you at the suggestion of our mutual friend, Mr. C. S. McCain. We have already made a nice profit, but you are getting in on the original basis. . . ." Wiggin wrote back to "thank you sincerely for your thought of me in connection with Southwestern Investors, Inc. . . . With renewed thanks for your courtesy," etc.

Pecora tried to get McCain to explain this trans-

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action for the benefit of Senators who had already learned a great deal about preferred lists, in the testimony of such other great bankers as J. P. Morgan and Company, Kuhn, Loeb and Company, and Dillon, Read and Company. But McCain was obdurate. He would not agree to Pecora's suggestion that Couch, in letting Wiggin in on the original basis at a time when there was already a substantial profit, was arranging a "gift or gratuity" for the head of the Chase Bank. However, Pecora is a master in the art of persuasion, and he finally suggested to the witness that "it was an outburst of generosity on Mr. Couch's part . . . in favor of Mr. Wiggin." McCain agreed to this, and was further brought to accept Pecora's comment that "it was establishing a friendly contact with the man at the head of a great big bank." Of course, Harvey Couch's generosity to Wiggin was not left unrequited. Couch got a firm foothold as director of the Chase; and Couch got his loans. Nor was McCain forgotten. Not only did he get loans from the Chase Bank, like Couch's inadequately secured, but McCain also got participations in syndicates from Wiggin's family corporations.

So far we have seen Couch and McCain as promoters, syndicate managers, operators, investment-trust organizers and benefactors to, and beneficiaries from, Mr. Wiggin. Now, we shall see Mr. McCain a follower in the footsteps of Mr. Wiggin. In the hearings of the Senate Committee last October, it appeared that the great head of the greatest bank in the country could find time to act as director of many other corporations. McCain also proved that he could successfully be a part-time officer of a bank losing hundreds of millions of dollars and himself make money by acting as director for other corporations. This many-sidedness and ubiquitousness of Mr. McCain evoked some mischievous questions from the counsel for the Senate Committee. Pecora, himself not a financier, had obviously been puzzled by the ability of these men to be omnipresent in multiple corporate directorships. Pecora subjected McCain to two tests. First, the banker was asked how many boards of directors he had joined. McCain, after pondering a bit, thought he belonged to ten or twelve. But Pecora indicated that he thought the banker was mistaken about the number of corporations for whose stockholders McCain was supposed to be a director. The banker conferred with his staff of assistants and finally came back with the reply that really he was a director in about twenty corporations. This was a good opening for the Committee's counsel. If a great banker does not know the number of the corporations in which he is acting as trustee for other people's money, he may not even remember the names of some of these corporations. Pecora obviously had this in mind, for he asked McCain to give the names of the companies, and to do so without receiving any help from his staff. Pecora was right. McCain forgot that he was a director of a big railroad in receivership, of a big industrial corporation, of a big investment trust. Pecora asked whether, like Wiggin, he had been receiving salaries from these corporations, in addition to the salary paid him by the Chase. In this respect, also, McCain had learned from Wiggin. Three corporatons were paying McCain an annual total of $12,000. A fourth at one time had paid him, as director, an annual fee of $5,000. Pecora asked whether these outside activities did not take McCain's time away from his bank. McCain answered that they did not, but, on the contrary, had been beneficial to it. That such outside absorption was considerable would seem to be indicated by McCain's complete lack of knowledge, throughout four years, that affiliates of the Chase—which was paying McCain a full-time salary—were engaged in market operations in the bank's stock, operations running into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

But our concern with McCain and his directorates has caused us to forget for the moment the other boy with whom, as McCain put it, "I started out in the same small town in Arkansas twenty-six years ago." This other boy had also acquired directorships—as well as power-and-light-company presidencies. Of course, the brightest jewel in Couch's collection was his directorship in the Chase, but when Hoover offered him a still greater prize, a directorship in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, with its billions of money to be lent to deserving borrowers, Couch was obliged to observe the proprieties and resign from the board of the Chase. However, Charlie McCain remained behind, and friendly relations were not entirely severed. The government's gain in acquiring Couch was not the Chase Bank's loss. Couch and his fellow directors on the R.F.C. made loans to various railroads, and parts of these loans were used by the railroads to pay their obligations to the Chase. In this fashion, Mr. McCain's bank indirectly obtained from Mr. Couch's government bank some $10 million.

Couch's Reconstruction Finance Corporation has made loans interesting in other ways to the Chase and to McCain. The Chase and its affiliates were heavily interested in the Rock Island Railway. McCain admitted on the stand that the R.F.C. has lent that railway more than $11 million. McCain himself was on its board. Couch's lawyer is on its board. In fact, a $10 million loan to the Rock Island was made by the R.F.C. only a few days after the Chase had made the loan to McCain for the purpose of enabling Couch to reduce his indebtedness to the Chase and end the criticism by the national bank examiners. It happens that the loan application of the Rock Island was pending in the office of the R.F.C. at the very time when Couch's loan at the Chase was "under water."

Some of the railroads that borrowed from the R.F.C. after Couch became a director have gone into bankruptcy, and facts have come to light which suggest that in some cases there may have been im-

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proper declarations of dividends, or possibly misuse of borrowed money. The R.F.C., as a creditor, would, one supposes, be sufficiently interested in testing these facts to urge the trustees of the bankrupt roads to start vigorous suits against former directors wherever called for. But, since this might involve law suits against boards of directors of which Couch himself or some of his friends were members, the R.F.C. might easily find itself in a position of considerable internal embarrassment.

Some of the questions put to McCain as a witness, and the earlier publicity about Couch, conveyed the intimation that the relationship between Couch and the Chase Bank was a delicate and special one. But McCain and Couch did not see it that way. McCain was asked why the bank's vice-president charged with the duty of asking Couch to set his loan straight wrote him apologetically. McCain explained that this was simply because the particular bank officer chosen for this particular task "is a very perfect gentleman." Couch himself explained another embarrassment, arising out of a letter he had written McCain. The letter dealt with various matters, including a large railroad loan in which the Chase was interested. Couch explained the letter by another, to the Senate Committee. He assured the Senators that " my dealings with New York banks have been in the usual course of private business. . . . Publicity given these routine business transactions has been of such a nature as to indicate that there was some irregularity about them. The letter I wrote to Mr. Charles S. McCain of the Chase National Bank will be understood when I tell you that we were reared together in Arkansas. It was a purely personal letter to my lifelong friend and business associate. . . . There probably is nothing in this situation that would justify the Committee in taking the time to hear me, but I shall be more than willing to appear if you think it desirable. . . . " This was many weeks before the lifelong friend appeared on the witness stand and the story became public.

Couch has not yet appeared before the Senate Committee. But the Committee has Mr. McCain's testimonial that "I have never come in contact with anybody, I think, with as high integrity and character as Mr. Couch."

Couch is still in the R.F.C. administering the New Deal for President Roosevelt. McCain is still in the Chase National Bank administering Aldrich's reform program for Wall Street.

Washington. T. R. B.

The Unemployed Incorporate

MR. PRESIDENT, what is a working man with a family to do when there is no work to be gotten?"

Mr. Taft (so it is recorded) scratched his huge head at this perplexing question, held the public meeting in suspense for a minute, and then gave that immortal answer:

"God knows, I don't."

Today the unemployed are answering this question for themselves. "First, we organize," they have said in action by the tens of thousands. "And then we organize some more, and then we organize on a statewide scale, and then on a national scale, and after that will come power and relief for us."

There is hardly a state in the country, hardly a county in many states, and surely not a city of any size in which an unemployed organization of some type isn't set up and functioning. The state of Ohio is dotted with well organized unemployed leagues with a membership of over 100,000. In California the Unemployed Coöperative Relief Association covers eleven counties of the state, and in Southern California alone approximately 90,000 unemployed have membership in this organization, with many more thousands in independent units. In Pennsylvania, in the Lehigh Valley, Alleghany County and Philadelphia, the League's Unemployed Councils have thousands in their ranks. In the state of Washington there is the Unemployed Citizens' League, with a record of many dramatic fights for the unemployed. This organization was a determining factor in the municipal elections held there in 1932. In the city of Tacoma in the same state there is a vigorous organization growing in numbers and prestige.

In Colorado, in and around Denver, there is another well knit organization, and there are others in Fort Wayne, Indiana; in Chicago and in the southern coal fields of Illinois; in various parts of North Carolina, West Virginia, Minnesota, Michigan and other states. Several well attended state conventions have been held, notably in Ohio, California and Pennsylvania. Everywhere, whether the movement is one of protest, barter or self-help, there is the pronounced desire for expansion and coördination, and the movement has a decidedly national outlook. Almost none of the groups is limited to community consciousness.

The Columbus convention held last July exemplified this. Some 800 delegates from eighteen states came to this convention, some from the most remote regions of the country, not only traveling under the most difficult conditions but in many cases coming without any previous knowledge of the character and composition of the convention and the elements sponsoring it. The need for an all-embracing, powerful national organization is everywhere keenly felt. The unemployed movement is national in

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outlook, if not in organic structure. The National Unemployed League organized at the convention in Columbus has the job of cementing this national outlook into a cohesive national organization and of getting common accord on program and policies.

The matter of general accord would be comparatively easy if the existing unemployed organizations were, as some people think, small groups dominated by radical elements. If that were the case, in spite of the serious differences between these groups, a minimum program would perhaps by this time have been agreed upon. But the unemployed movement is not a radical-fostered movement. Though the radicals have been a spur, and in some sections the actual promoters and leaders, many thousands of workers, white-collar men as well as manual laborers, have come into the unemployed movement who had never before been associated with their fellow workers in an organization. Conditions, common despair, common suffering, have driven these workers together. In spite of the much vaunted individualism of the average American, he has come to understand that if there is any salvation at all it is through organization. The idea of collective action has been hammered into him by the life about him. While he has been told since his school days that every man in our era rises or falls as an individual, his experience has constantly given that doctrine the lie.

Some of the leading figures in the National Unemployed League came into the unemployed organizations as carrot pullers. In California a year ago the movement was in the carrot-pulling stage. Gathering up wasting foodstuffs on the ranches, carting it in many odd ways to the commissaries set up by the unemployed in abandoned buildings, and distributing it according to need, were the sole activities of the Southern California unemployed organizations.

One of the most forceful men in the unemployed movement, a former civil engineer from the Northwest, told me he entered the movement through a barber shop, his interest in the possibilities of barter and self-help receiving its initial spur when he traded for a haircut a pencil sharpener that had been left in his office when the landlord removed the other fixtures. Another leading worker in the movement got interested while walking in a working-class district on his way to a tool plant to ask if there was any change in the job situation. It was drizzling. He observed a crowd gathered around a man on a stoop, with some furniture between them. The twenty-odd people around this one man were in high temper. He was a bailiff evicting a family with several children out into the rain. The neighbors were protesting. This stranger, unaccountably, found himself making a speech, and a good one at that. A few more people gathered around; somebody began to push the bailiff off the stoop. Immediately many hands were laid on him, and he retreated. The fight against evictions in this community spread, unemployed leagues were organized and that entire county now boasts a strong league which has put an end to evictions.

Some of those who are now the most militant local leaders of some of the leagues at first had the idea that unemployment was a temporary difficulty and threw themselves into the activities of the unemployed with the intention of cashing in later on in their business or political careers, when everyone would be back at work and would remember those who had been the friends of the "working man" in his hour of difficulty. Small-fry politicians, especially, came in with this in mind. But unemployment persisted, many of these "benefactors" were themselves wiped out, and now some of them are the most militant in the ranks. There is an old knight of the Ku Klux Klan in Columbus, Ohio, a man who had been on many night rides. I have heard him speak at an eviction demonstration on a platform presided over by a Negro. A young man who for three years was an office boy for J. P. Morgan and Company is now one of the leading spirits in the unemployed movement.

No one can, at this time, venture to describe even the main outline of the philosophy or ideology of the organized unemployed. The National Unemployed League has a platform and a program and constitution adopted without opposition by the 800 delegates at the Columbus convention. That program stresses the immediate need of the unemployed—adequate relief—and proposes national unemployment insurance and organizational unity of all the unemployed. The convention specifically instructed the national officers and national committee to proceed immediately with the promotion of a National Unity convention of all groups of organized unemployed. The convention was decidedly anti-capitalistic in sentiment, and the new declaration of independence, drafted at the convention and received by the delegates with enthusiasm, was clear in its condemnation of the present economic and social order.

But the unanimity of sentiment of the delegates at the Columbus convention was the expression of the most articulate elements among the organized unemployed. Back home there is still a lot of clarifying to do. The movement is moving in zig-zag fashion. Some groups are far ahead of others. It is a straggling army, but it is moving forward all the time.

The difficulties of unification can be illustrated by referring to some of the mail that has come into the office since the Columbus convention. After Arnold Johnson, the national secretary, had answered a request to speak in Charleston, West Virginia, by saying that he would start hiking there soon, the Charleston group informed the national office that they were particularly pleased that Johnson was coming—having learned that he was a graduate of a divinity school, they felt he was qualified to open the meeting with prayer. Around Burbank and Pasadena, a unit planned to form a cor-

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poration in order to do business and enter into contracts as a legal entity. At Allentown, Pennsylvania, the Leagues organized a local Farmer-Labor political party and entered candidates for all local offices. In Ohio a committee of local unemployed leaders demanded that the state office launch a campaign to run Bill Truax, president of the Ohio Unemployed League, for Governor of Ohio. When informed that the Governor's term did not expire for more than a year, they waved this aside—"Why, we'll recall the old cat," said a farmer from Vinton County.

The National League is seeking not isolation but expansion and unification of the unemployed masses. Although it is, of course, derided by the revolutionary elements, it intends to become a mass organization or to become nothing at all. With that in mind, the League is at work organizing regional conventions in the principal sections of the country. A Mississippi Valley division office was opened some time ago at Springfield, Illinois, Louis Budenz, Munsey Gleaton, Margaret Rodgers and others doing the spade work in that vicinity. It is being carried on by Gerry Allard, Jimmie Cross and others. Work for a Pacific Coast convention is also under way. The convention is expected to draw in unemployed organizations of California, Washington, Utah, Idaho and Colorado. Arnold Johnson is at the present time on a tour of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina preparing for a Southern regional convention.

In every instance the idea is not only to hold a convention of already interested leagues but to get the unemployed organized and into action on local, county and state bases so that they can enter regional and national conventions with experience and not merely theories. Conditions are constantly changing, requiring swift changes in tactics. In West Virginia, for example, several thousand workers in private employment have joined the league, saying that henceforth there must be "one big union" of all workers and no more craft and trade divisions whatever; the league officials are carrying on the same collective-bargaining activities for these workers that any union might do. The inauguration of the C.W.A. program by the federal government in some cases drew into the leagues hundreds of those who got no jobs and felt more keenly than ever the need for an organization. In other cases workers have dropped out of the leagues, confident that "the corner has at last been turned" and feeling that they are no longer unemployed. In still other cases workers taken on C.W.A jobs have found themselves immediately up against grievances requiring adjustment, and have joined the leagues as the one organization they knew which seemed capable of handling miscellaneous and unskilled workers. Some of these are urging the leagues to eliminate the term "unemployed" from their name. Others say: "No, what's the difference? In a few weeks we are just as likely as not to be out of jobs again."

The National Unemployed League has a difficult and huge task to perform. Fully aware of its difficulties, it is also aware of its great opportunity. In spite of all, the job can and will be done. A most devoted, energetic, realistic group of men have gathered around this organization. Hardships are of no consequence. The obvious need for a cohesive national unemployed movement is sincerely felt by the articulate elements among the unemployed. They are going to be a national factor in our national life.

ANTHONY RAMUGLIA.

The Religion of Art

II: *A Discourse over the Grave of Dada*

WHY WRITE about Dada? It's dead, they explain, it's out of fashion, it belongs to a world that has gone under. *They* know what to write about, what to forget or admire, these young gentlemen or comrades finding their sure enlightenment in whatever may be the bible of the day after yesterday—in the last lecture by T. S. Eliot, in the latest word from Moscow on proletarian art, in the newest disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas, Leon Trotsky, James Joyce or Hitler—or what *is* the fashion this afternoon, what will it be tomorrow? They know about fashions, *they* have the social sense of art: intuitively and collectively they decide when something is to be done or said or worshiped, when attacked, when buried with a decent sneer. They drift with the current and I envy them: they will never be outdated or ridiculous, they will merit a column of newsprint when they die. My French friends of the Dada movement were always ridiculous; they had no sense of humor; by principle, they put themselves in the wrong. Offer them the most glowing prospects, the easiest road to fame, and they turned aside, by principle. "Since all these very intelligent authors are right," they said, "and since all pills for pale people are pink, let's try for just once not to be right." And they persisted in being wrong: the most talented group of young writers I have ever met, the most loftily ambitious, the most disinterested in their burning devotion to literature, they persisted by principle in digging themselves a common grave.

And what remains now of the Dada movement? It is a question I can't easily answer, not having

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read the whole of its literature. Perhaps there are poems by Paul Eluard or Philippe Soupault, early stories by Louis Aragon, tricks of speech originated by Tristan Tzara, which will be reproduced and live—or perhaps they will all be swept into the footnotes of some historian's Chapter XXVI, "The Decay of French Capitalist Literature (1890-1930)"—it doesn't matter. The truth is that Dada, whether or not it produced anything, represented something of value: the extreme of a long continued process, the farthest point that the mind can reach by following a certain road. After Dada the path was blocked: No Thoroughfare. But let us pick our way over the barrier, past the red lanterns, and see if we can learn why the street was deserted.

Tristan Tzara says that Dada was born in 1916, at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. There is some dispute about this place and date, but Tzara's word ought to be final: after all, he founded Dada. He is a Rumanian Jew, small and graceful, who belongs to a family of formerly rich merchants; educated in France and Switzerland, he adopted French as his native tongue. It is wholly fitting that this new school of art and letters should have been founded in a cabaret, by a young man so thoroughly expatriated that he could not speak three words of his native language. It is fitting, too, that Dada should have transferred its headquarters to Paris.

The move was made at the beginning of 1920, which was the year of the great Dada manifestations. At a matinee on January 23, Tzara was introduced to the public. He read aloud a newspaper article, while an electric bell kept ringing so that nobody could hear what he said. A meeting was held at the Grand Palace of the Champs Elysées; several thousand people attended it. At the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre two months later, twelve hundred were turned away. "There were three spectators for every seat," Tzara wrote; "it was suffocating. Enthusiastic members of the audience had brought musical instruments to interrupt us. The enemies of Dada threw down from the balconies copies of an anti-Dada paper called Non, in which we were described as lunatics. The scandal reached proportions absolutely unimaginable." But it reached even greater proportions at the Salle Gaveau. "For the first time in the history of the world, people threw at us not only eggs, vegetables and pennies, but beefsteaks as well. It was a very huge success."

Whether the public, the idiotic public, expressed its interest in terms of beefsteak or applause, Dada was launched. It exactly suited the temper of a world disorganized by the War. All over Europe Dadaist groups had sprung into being, and everywhere they repeated the same pattern of childishness and audacity: they played violently with art and politics and paper dollies. The Dadaists in Berlin had their own magazines, their publishing house and a Dada Club which soon brought to light great talents—Tzara believed that their many demonstrations helped to produce the German revolution. In Cologne an allied group was permitted by the city authorities to hold a Dada exhibition in a public urinal, with free admission. By 1922 there were Dadaists in all the European capitals, even Moscow; lectures on Dadaism were being delivered at the University of Tiflis, in Soviet Georgia, before a proletarian audience. A world congress of Dadaists was held in France. But at this conference, which demonstrated the strength of the movement, there was a split in the ranks, a division between those who wished to carry Dadaism into public life and those who were content to express their disgust in practical jokes, without being bothered by the police. Friendships were broken, adherents dropped away: at the very moment when Dada seemed most successful, it was dying at the heart. Soon it was replaced by a new movement, Superrealism, which in turn was causing its scandals and enlisting its adherents. One could write, "Here lies Dada, 1916-1924."

But the history of Dada was in reality much longer. Its existence was rendered possible by a succession of literary schools beginning before the middle of the nineteenth century. There had been the art-for-art's-sake school of Théophile Gautier, there had been the Naturalist school (or at least the part of it which surrounded Flaubert and the Brothers Goncourt); there had been the Parnassians, the Decadents, the Symbolists; in England there had been the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the Oxford Esthetes, the group surrounding the Yellow Book—then the tempo increased: there were the Post-Impressionists, the Cubists (schools of literature and schools of art were amalgamating), the Neo-Classicists, the Fantaisists; in Italy the Futurists, in England the Vorticists, in America the Imagists, in Germany the Expressionists, in Russia the Constructivists—still the dance moved faster, so that a single artist like Picasso might successively adhere to several schools, was even expected to *changer d'école* as one might change a coat—then, at the summit of this long development, came Dada, like a last act that cast a light of farce on the preceding acts, like a capstone self-crowned with a duncecap. And Dada in turn was overthrown, it disappeared from the world of art, but its influence lived on. The stone sank, but the ripples persisted until the waters of the pool were troubled by a vaster storm.

Edmund Wilson was the first American critic to show that a single impulse persisted through eighty years of quarreling doctrines and self-devouring schools. In "Axel's Castle" he suggested that the name of Symbolism was broad enough to cover this whole literary movement. His book is extraordinarily illuminating. Nobody has written, I doubt that anyone could write, a better exposition of Yeats, Joyce, Proust; and he does not confine himself to expository criticism: he places these writers in historical perspective and considers the values

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that their works imply. Yet "Axel's Castle" has an obvious weakness of structure. Midway in the book, Wilson changes his conception of the subject; so that although he continues to describe it by the same name, he is really talking about two different things. In the first chapter he is discussing Symbolism primarily as a *method,* as "an attempt, by carefully studied means—a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors—to communicate unique personal feelings." But at the end of the book he is discussing Symbolism as an attitude, an ideology, in reality a *way of life* which was adopted by a whole series of writers.

This changing conception of his subject led Wilson into making two complementary mistakes. The Symbolistic *method* is less important than he believes it to be: its history was shorter and its influence less widespread in the world of international letters. But the *attitude toward life* which he attributes to Yeats and Valéry and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam was also that of many writers who could not in any technical sense be regarded as Symbolists. During the course of a long history, this attitude affected not only poets and novelists of different schools, but also painters, sculptors, composers, dramatists and ordinary people who confessed with bitter humility that they weren't "creative," that they were unable to "express themselves artistically." Boys of my age in Pittsburgh, Columbus and Chicago acted and talked in a certain fashion because they had been influenced by what might be called *the religion of art.*

One example is enough to show the difference between Wilson's two conceptions of his subject. In the first chapter he explains that Symbolism was a reaction from the Naturalism of novelists like Gustave Flaubert and the cold objectivism of poets like Théophile Gautier. But later, when he describes the anti-social philosophy connected with Symbolism, we can see that Gautier was one of its founders and Flaubert perhaps its principal sage. Among the many episodes preserved in the Journal of the Brothers Goncourt, there is one which seems especially significant. It shows that the religion of art very quickly expressed itself as a way of life that was essentially anti-human. . . . Flaubert with several of his friends once visited a brothel in Rouen. On a bet, before them all, he made love to a prostitute without removing his hat or taking the cigar from his mouth. The gesture was something more than an ugly boast. It announced a furious contempt for everything held sacred by society—as if he had said to the honest burghers of his time, "*You* think that life is beautiful, that the act of love is holy, yet all of you together, the whole pack of lifelings, couldn't write one passable poem or even recognize the beauty of a sentence patiently carved from marble." It is as if he proclaimed that nothing had value in itself, that everything outside the world of art should be violently rejected. "Art is vast enough," he wrote in one of his letters, "to occupy the whole man."

Although such a doctrine might produce, and has in fact produced, great works of art and ingenious technical discoveries, it does so at a sacrifice. The religion of art is not at all calculated to nourish rich careers or to bring forth characters that compel our admiration. The "pure poet," the "artist proper," goes stumbling through life, often under a burden of neurosis. Each new artist spies out the mistakes of his predecessors and tries to guard against them by making some theoretical change. He thinks that a little more foresight will render his position secure: he sets to work deepening the moat or razing some vulnerable outwork of his ivory tower, but nevertheless it crumbles—and still newer artists rebuild the ruins according to an improved design. Always there must be changes—and there is even a moment when change itself, change for its own sake, becomes an article of doctrine.

Nor is this the only tendency implied by the religion of art as it moved inevitably toward extremes. The artist being regarded as someone set apart from the world of ordinary men, it followed that his aloofness would be increasingly emphasized. The world would more and more diminish in the eyes of the artist, and the artist would be magnified at the expense of the world. These tendencies, in turn, implied still others. Art would come to be treated as a self-sustaining entity, an essence neither produced by the world nor reacting upon it: art would be *purposeless.* No longer having to communicate with a public, it would become more opaque, difficult, *obscure.* It would be freed from all elements extraneous to itself, and particularly from logic and meaning, statistics and exhortation: it would become *pure poetry.* The independence of the artist would be asserted in always more vehement language: he would be proud, disdainful toward family duties and the laws of the tribe: he would end by assuming one of God's attributes and becoming a *creator.*

But this function and privilege is also a limitation. The creator cannot be a copyist: he must not content himself with reproducing nature, must not utilize the creations of other artists, must not even copy his own creations. As soon as anything has been reduced to a principle—by no matter whom—it must be abandoned to the mere disciples. The "artists proper" must always prophesy, explore, lead the way into new countries of emotion; and they cannot turn back: they are confined to the frontier, to the ever receding land beyond the boundary of the last formula. They are first authorized and then as it were condemned to go forward, to make discoveries and leave them behind, to march in all directions, faster, faster, till their headlong charge can scarcely be distinguished from a rout.

And yet these diverse tendencies, these paths continually diverging toward the four horizons, all set forth in the beginning from one easily apprehended principle. *Art is separate from life; the artist is independent of the world and superior to the lifelings.* From this principle the hostile schools were

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born, and the manifestoes that canceled each other, and the inexplicable works of art that they called forth. By this principle were guided the careers of great poets and novelists, and the ambitions toward which their careers were directed—Huysmanns' attempt to build an artificial paradise, Mallarmé's to invent an algebra of literature, Ezra Pound's frantic flight from his admirers, Joyce's ambition to create a work of genius, Proust's ambition to recapture his own past in the longest novel ever written—all these belonged to the religion of art; and even Valéry's forsaking of art was a development out of that religion. It is written that no tendency, no formation of the human mind, is forsaken until every path has been explored, every possibility exhausted, nor even until the whole search has been ridiculed by the searchers. Seen from a perspective of years, the process is as logical as the growth of a tree: one might say that the Dada movement and its ending were both foreshadowed in the letters of Gustave Flaubert.

Edmund Wilson believes that the Symbolist way of life leads naturally toward two extremes:

> There are, as I have said, in our contemporary society, for writers who are unable to interest themselves in it either by studying it scientifically, by attempting to reform it or by satirizing it, only two alternative courses to follow, Axel's or Rimbaud's. If one chooses the first of these, the way of Axel, one shuts oneself up in one's own private world, cultivating one's private fantasies, encouraging one's private manias, ultimately preferring one's absurdest chimeras to the most astonishing contemporary realities, ultimately mistaking one's chimeras for realities. If one chooses the second, the way of Rimbaud, one tries to leave the twentieth century behind—to find the good life in some country where modern manufacturing methods and modern democratic institutions do not present any problems to the artist because they haven't yet arrived.

Here, briefly and eloquently described, are the two courses adopted by what is perhaps a majority of the "pure poets" and "artists proper." But they are not the only alternatives. There is, moreover, a serious error in Wilson's formulation of the problem. What he calls the way of Rimbaud is not the one which Rimbaud actually chose: instead, it is the path followed by Paul Gauguin (or at least the path which Gauguin was described as following in "The Moon and Sixpence," a novel enormously popular just after the War, and one which is still propelling the tourists of art toward Tahiti, Bali, Majorca and other islands unspoiled by modern methods of production). It is the course generally described as that of "escape"—we have all met people who spoke of "taking flight" from New York, London, Paris or Henry Ford, of "finding a refuge" from skyscrapers, cocktail parties and neurosis.

Rimbaud himself had no desire to escape into an artist's paradise. His temperament was adventurous, aggressive, and in three brief years he had made astonishing conquests in the world of art. Now he wished to leave that world behind, either because his achievements there seemed easy and unexciting, or else because he had confused literature in general with the homosexuality of his friend Paul Verlaine and had decided that "all that" was bad. Very clear in his mind was the idea that by obstinate patience, by pure will, he could make equal conquests in the more difficult world of life. When he finally reached Abyssinia, after a dozen wild attempts, he did not sit dozing or making verses in the shade of a banyan tree: he bought coffee from the natives and sold them modern rifles. He had a harem, it is true, but he assembled these ladies each from a different tribe and with a definite purpose: he called them his "portable dictionaries bound in black leather." Even a gangrened leg did not keep him from making long journeys on horseback, so great was his energy, so bitter his determination. . . . Rimbaud in the end was as tragically defeated by life as he had been triumphant in art. Yet his, too, was a possible course, and a heroic one, and there have been "artists proper" who tried to follow his example.

Still another extreme was that depicted by Paul Valéry in his imaginary portrait of M. Teste and his two essays on Leonardo (as indeed in his own career). He suggests that a great mind might abandon literature, not to embrace life, but in order to retreat still farther from it—literature is regarded as something impure, tainted with action, and the mind will avoid all forms of action, confining itself to its own private concerns. And there are other extremes to which the religion of art may sometimes lead. Valéry speaks of "the chess game which we play with knowledge." There happens to be a highly talented artist who abandoned painting in order to play chess. When he found that he could not become the greatest chess player in the world, he half-abandoned that also, and spent his time carving bits of marble into lumps of sugar; he kept a bowl of stone-sugar on his table for the amusement of his guests. And this, too, is a possible extreme. If carried beyond a certain point, the religion of art imperceptibly merges into the irreligion of art, into a state of mind in which the artist deliberately fritters away his talents through contempt for the idiot-public which can never understand.

But what I am trying to make clear is that all these extremes—Teste's, Rimbaud's, Axel's, the way of escape and the retreat into futility—existed side by side in the Dada movement. They were mingled there with an infusion of youth, vigor, Paris after the War, and a not unnatural taste for novelty and scandal. MALCOLM COWLEY.

This is the second of three articles on the religion of art. In the third article, to appear next week, Mr. Cowley will tell what Dada was, and how it ended, and how, in a sense, the whole religion of art died with it.—THE EDITORS.

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Washington Notes

Steering the Congress—Adjournment, When?—Types of Meanness—A Sorrowful Shift for the Bankers

BY THE time this issue of The New Republic appears the Congress will have received Mr. Roosevelt's two messages and will know in a general way what he expects of it. It will not, there is reason to think, know all he expects, since the distinct White House policy is not to give the full dose at the start. Some of the most interesting and important of the administration proposals will be withheld until the machinery has got fully started and the members of both House and Senate have sufficiently settled into their chosen or appointed grooves to permit a really satisfactory survey. There are, besides, other reasons. One, I think, is the shrewd White House belief that there is not the capacity in Congress to absorb and assimilate too elaborate a program at the start. This applies equally to the public. No President in my recollection watches and studies his public with greater care and thoroughness than this one. He appreciates better than anyone around him that his real strength is in the almost unprecedented public support he has had from the start, and still has. No President has ever analyzed more keenly the newspaper comment, or been more closely attentive to criticism and the general reaction. Nor have any Presidents I have known more effectively adopted the many devices available to the White House occupant for the nursing and nourishment of a favorable popular sentiment.

This, it will be agreed, is a highly intelligent thing for Mr. Roosevelt to do, and it will be agreed further that he is doing it with great skill and effectiveness. The argument of his intimate advisers is that public interest and support can best be sustained if, instead of presenting his program as a whole in one grand smash at the start, he springs a surprise from time to time. This has a double effect. It keeps Congress in a state of uncertainty and does not give congressional opposition the chance to cement. It promotes the idea of an agile, versatile and resourceful leader, thus puzzling the hostile elements about which front to attack and giving the people generally a continuous show with just that touch of the dramatic of which they are so fond.

Then, of course, there is in addition the eminently practical reason that some of the new administration proposals are not yet in shape to be presented. They will not, however, be delayed very long, because there is no secret at all about the presidential desire to make this a short session. What the White House would very much like is to get Congress out of Washington in May, and there will be a serious effort to do this. Every President has wanted to do that, but none has succeeded. I do not think, great as has been his success in other directions, that Mr. Roosevelt will have his way about this; and if too much pressure is put on, real resentment will be engendered.

There is, of course, no reason why Congress should not adjourn in May. There is, certainly, ample opportunity to do everything that should be done before that time, but, nevertheless, in my judgment, it will not be done. To come to Washington for the long session and be shunted home in a little more than three months would hurt the dignity of Congress more than anything I can imagine. It would make the members look small and unnecessary. It would not give them time to make their play to the people. It would jostle them out of their routine, interfere with their leisurely habits and spoil the season for their wives and daughters, to say nothing of themselves. In brief, the members of Congress don't want to go home in May. They want to stay until the hot weather and, in all probability, they will. I know Senators who would rather relinquish their most cherished political principles than be forced to adjourn in the spring. Most of these, as I pointed out last week, have no wish to assail or obstruct the administration program. On the contrary, their intention is to keep amiably in line so long as the public is back of the President. But they want, and intend, to do this discursively and with what they conceive to be the required amount of investigation, inquiry and debate. With no disposition to dismantle or dismember either the A.A.A. or the N.R.A., the intention is to center considerable fire upon both, and to offer amendments of wide variety and scope.

Moreover, these will come, not from the Republicans, but from Democratic and progressive friends of the administration. Fully appreciating these facts, the heads of the different governmental agencies of the New Deal are preparing to meet every possible inquiry and answer every possible attack. In most cases they will, I am convinced, be able to do this successfully, for the reason that a great many of the points made against the New Deal operations here are based on rumors started in the typical Washington way, which, upon investigation, usually turn out to be without foundation. There is, for example, the present whispering campaign against the liberals in the administration on the ground that they are all Jews. The silliness of this sort of sabotage is equaled by its meanness.

In the first place it is not true. The outstanding liberal office-holder, who bears the brunt of the Tory attack, happens to be Professor Rexford G. Tugwell, who is not a Jew. In the second place, such Jews as are in important relations with the government differ widely among themselves, ranging from the conservatism of Baruch and Morgenthau to the liberalism of Frankfurter and Jerome Frank. I do not by any means intend to say that the operations of the N.R.A. and the A.A.A. are flawless or that there are not sound points to be made against them. What I do mean to say, however, is that a considerable number of the things one hears, which certain Senators seem to take seriously, are completely baseless, and that this present whispering campaign is one of them.

One interesting development of the past week is the general agreement that the President has abandoned the idea of modifying the securities-regulation law in the directions so strongly urged upon him by certain conservative influences both inside and outside the administration. There undoubtedly will be some amendments to the Act, but I shall miss my guess if they are not along the lines of strengthening rather than weakening it. The thing that swung the President away from those advocating emasculation was the clarity with which it was borne in upon him that any such move would cause a genuine revolt by the

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progressive Republicans in the Senate. Though they are few in number, and despite the big Democratic majority, it is quite clear that their support is indispensable to the Roosevelt program. They are, for one thing, easily the most forceful and articulate group in the Senate, and their effectiveness has been demonstrated a good many times in the past. Up to now, Mr. Roosevelt has had no more earnest and sincere supporter than Senator George Norris of Nebraska. Senator Norris, it is known, would not hesitate to break with the President if once convinced that the President had succumbed to the influence of Wall Street. That just this influence was back of the movement to modify the Securities Act there is no question, and it was a real relief to the friends of the President when he spiked the reports that he had been deeply impressed by their arguments. The effort to modify will, of course, be made, but it is not likely to be successful. The progressives are solidly determined it shall not be and there is behind them, in this case, a very strong popular support.

One of the real fights that will open shortly, and in preparation for which banking propaganda is already flowing freely, is the move to prevent the deposit-guarantee plan, which took effect January 1, as a temporary proposition and applying only to deposits under $2,500, from being extended and made permanent on July 1. Much the same feeling prevails about this as about the Securities Act, and the struggle will produce approximately the same division. Also, I might say, the result promises to be identical. In my opinion, no backward step in bank and security regulation is possible at this session. The whole trend is in the opposite direction, and the more openly it is fought by the bankers, the surer the bankers are to fail. The plain fact is that the people want such regulation—and want it to the limit. In view of the light shed in the past year, who can blame them?

Washington. T.R.B.

Other People's Money

Public Dividends, Private Salaries, Secret Deficits —Michigan Bankers—A Glad-Hand Holding Company

THE Detroit banks have given us two valuable lessons, and these have been brought to our notice again by Mr. Pecora. One of them is the folly of that principle of concealment which business has always cherished and which Mr. Hoover endorsed. The other is the madness of the holding-company device applied to banking.

The Guardian Detroit Union Group, owners of many banks, had a deficit of $39,000 in 1930, of $288,930 in 1931 and of a still larger sum in 1932.

It might be supposed that a deficit is a matter that ought to be of interest to the stockholders of the Guardian Group. But the reports to the stockholders for 1930, 1931 and 1932 omitted mention of this dismal fact. Stockholders, like the general public, are supposed to be thin-brained creatures who are not to be entrusted with the data affecting their own interests. This information was, therefore, held in secrecy by the able men set by God over their estates. The concealment was made in order not to terrify the stockholders or the depositors of the banks which the Group owned. Yet, as it turned out, the banks crashed and the disaster was quite as complete as if the facts had all been disclosed.

While these deficits were mounting, the salaries of officials were rising. In 1930 the deficit was $39,000, the salaries $86,000. In 1931 the deficits were $288,930, but the salaries had risen to $131,624. In 1932 the deficits were still larger and the institution was ready for the boneyard. But the salaries went to $161,280. This is another little fact which was thought better kept away from the stockholders.

At all events, in 1933, Mr. Robert O. Lord, the erstwhile head of this bankrupt concern, admits that the facts were withheld in 1930 because it was thought better not to frighten the stockholders, but that now, in 1933, he believes stockholders ought to have every scrap of information that is available about their corporation. That, at least, is a gain.

The Glass-Steagall Banking Act of 1933 does nothing to outlaw holding-company control of banks. Unless that step is taken, all banking-reform measures will ultimately turn out to be vicious. The large National Bank of Commerce and a number of other banks in Michigan were owned and controlled by the Guardian Detroit Union Group. As the lean years of the thirties ate deeper into the more or less insubstantial reserves of the holding company, the inevitable phenomenon revealed itself. The holding company was a promotional operation. No other good reason for a holding company in the banking field can be invented. Its principal business was selling its own stock. Hundreds of thousands of shares had been sold at high prices and the money had been loaned to the buyers by the banks which the holding company controlled. What is more, that holding-company stock had been pledged with the banks as security for the loans. It was necessary to maintain the price of this holding-company stock on the Detroit Stock Exchange. It was therefore necessary to make a good showing for the holding company. That is why the deficits were kept secret. But, what is infinitely worse, huge sums were borrowed by the holding company, and the banks that it owned were bled white in order to pay dividends to it. In the year 1932 this holding company, in order to conceal its collapse from the public, paid out $375,134 in dividends. It had earned no dividends. It had had deficits for three years. At the moment it had contracted huge loans and was paying that year $722,000 in interest on them. It had no money to pay dividends. In order to pay them, therefore, it forced the banks that it owned to declare dividends, which were of course paid to the holding company. It forced banks which were already in a shaky condition to pay it $375,134 in dividends.

This, of course, is one of the things that a holding company controlling a bank can do. It can bleed the bank for its own purposes. The bank becomes merely a pawn in the company's more extensive operations. And this, of course, is what this holding company in Detroit did.

I have said that the holding company is generally to be found in the possession of promoters. And who will defend the presence of the promoter in charge of a bank? Of course, it was a promoter who ran these Detroit banks.

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Mr. Pecora has brought to light a most interesting document. It is a report made to the Comptroller of the Currency by the Chief Bank Examiner for the Seventh District. It was made in June, 1932, and relates to the Guardian Detroit Union Group of banks. It runs:

> The Guardian Detroit Group was somewhat of a promotion scheme, and in order to show satisfactory earnings in the holding company, dividends were declared far beyond the limit of conservatism; and losses were not taken in the banks. They have always been extremely reluctant to charge off losses and have always desired that they be taken from earnings, but the record of earnings of their banks is most unsatisfactory, and this plan would not permit the elimination of many losses.
>
> It is very apparent that Mr. Lord of the Guardian Group is not a banker and he never has been and never will be one. He is more of a glad-hand, promoter type, and he always chooses the path of least resistance which has now created the present problem with the Group.

It was this Mr. Lord who sat in power over a holding company which controlled a great string of banks and trust companies and which, with another holding company, dominated four-fifths of all the banking resources of Michigan. It was Mr. Lord and his Guardian Detroit Union Group and the Detroit Bankers' Company (the other holding company) who, with their vicious type of banking, brought about the greatest banking collapse in our history. This kind of holding-company banking still remains unscotched in our laws.

Mr. J. Stewart Baker, chairman of the board of the Bank of the Manhattan Company, writes calling attention to an error in one observation of mine touching on his bank. Two weeks ago I discussed a group of excellent reforms instituted by that bank, but deplored the bank's failure to do away with its holding-company form of control. Mr. Stewart calls my attention to the fact that, while the Manhattan Company was a holding company up to a year ago, and as such controlled the Bank of Manhattan Trust Company, this dual corporate character has been done away with and the Bank of Manhattan has resumed immediate ownership and direction of the bank. I noted at the time the interesting series of operations by which the capital structure of this bank had been simplified, but erroneously supposed that the holding company still continued to exist. I am more than glad to add this reform to the others made effective by this bank.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

January

The summer, dead and gone, left dust
That winter's runnels change to mud.
And even bright arterial blood,
Dried in its tissue, turns to rust.

I wade through muddy roads to find
A wind to shine my rusty mind.

T. S. MATTHEWS.

Lady Blessington

The Strange Life of Lady Blessington, by Michael Sadleir. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 370 pages. $3.50.

IN 1797 "Beau" Power, Edmund, stupid, handsome, cruel, snobbish, moved from the Irish village of Knockbrit, where his five children had been born, to Clonmel, where Lord Donoughmore turned him from sympathy with the rebels into a Castle magistrate whose duty was to hunt them down. At that time Sally (baptized Margaret), the ugly duckling of the family, was eight years old. She was too plain for the notice of callers, and too frail and weak for the nursery games, but a certain Anne Dwyer, a spinster of young middle age, mothered her and led her to the consolation of reading. Her father's move left behind forever the one friend of the child, who sniveled during the drive, was pinched, scolded and slapped by her mother, and as she hung in the strange doorway with her pocket bulging, had the bunch of wild flowers hidden there taken from her. Her mother threw the flowers out of the window, the children danced a jeering circle around the weeping mite; and "the first plate was forged in that armor of smiling self-sufficiency—that shell of glittering suavity and gracious kindliness—which was so impenetrably to cover the dreams, the ambitions, the melancholy and the indifferent cynicism of the most gorgeous Lady Blessington." "There are so few," she said once in a letter, "before whom one would condescend to appear otherwise than happy."

At puberty Sally Power had flowered from plainness into the beauty that was to be the talk of more than one capital, and the spring of more than one romance, scandal and fame. It is at this point that the author states his theory of a life that has puzzled so many of Lady Blessington's chroniclers, judges and friends. The capacity, he says, to relate emotions and physical sensations was terrified out of existence before the girl reached the age of sixteen. Nobody can deny that Lady Blessington was capable of affection; that she was capable of love seems another matter. She could provoke desire and, if unavoidable, submit to it, but lacked the power to reciprocate and was therefore unable to satisfy it. On this basis her life and character can be convincingly interpreted, and a coherence and focus given to that lack of congruity in her career that has so interminably been pointed out.

In Clonmel, Beau Power, now hated by the Irish, who burned his grain, maimed his cattle and so on, made his house the rendezvous for other hated men and for the riotous officers of the local garrison.

At fourteen, Sally had already been driven, by the nature of this life around her, toward more maturity than was common; at fifteen she was sold by her father, a sot in a difficult position financially and socially, to the richer, more ruthless and less liked of the two captains who asked her hand. She became Mrs. Margaret Farmer. Her husband's brutality was such as to give even so frightened and bullied a child courage to refuse, after three months of it, to live with him any longer. Farmer, ordered to the Curragh, had only time to give her a beating, this time not sadistic, and let her go creeping back to her parent's house. From then on, "although she grew in loveliness, she never

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provoked real passion or sought to provoke it, because her sexual sensibility was dead. She was not yet sixteen."

With her father's decline, the squalid, riotous house and the renewed cruelties, Margaret Farmer's life was what may be imagined, though details are lacking for these years. In 1806 and early in 1807, she began an intimacy with Captain Thomas Jenkins, to whom at length, now that the violence of her father, whose career had ended in dismissal and disgrace, was turned more violently than ever against her, she fled in terror for her life. At twenty she was established at Jenkins' house in Hampshire. She had five years there, absorbed in books, hidden from the people who meant nothing to her but fear, forgetting slowly the cruelty of her initiation into adult life. Captain Jenkins' family connections were kind to her, he himself was lavish. The stories against the day in London when the beautiful Lady Blessington should appear were, however, already in the making. In this placid companionship, marked by Jenkins' tepidity and Margaret's dutiful but never passionate response, the cultivation of her mind, the charm and brilliance of her conversation, and her genius for drawing out the confidence of others, developed. So that when, late in 1814, Viscount Mountjoy began a series of Hampshire visits, and in 1816, as the Earl of Blessington, offered his friend £10,000 by way of compensation for the lady, he carried off to London one of the "most widely read and in artistic matters best informed women in London society."

The previous history of Lord Blessington—then in his early thirties, with £30,000 a year—must be read in Mr. Sadleir's account, as must the fashion in which he set up his future wife in London, guaranteeing her respectability by never visiting her alone, and seeing in her meanwhile the perfect image of what the lady of his London house was to be. For Mr. Sadleir the "sexual nullity" of Margaret Farmer finds here its argument only further clinched. For readers in general the fantasies, vagaries and astonishments of the English life that are to appear all through the volume begin to amaze. At the moment, however, the central issue was Margaret's divorce from Farmer, who soon afterward got himself so drunk that he fell out of a high window in the King's Bench and was killed. "On February 16, 1818, at the church in Bryanston Square, a splendid marriage ceremony changed both of Margaret Farmer's names and set a coronet upon her lovely head. She was henceforth Marguerite, Countess of Blessington." After that followed the Irish honeymoon. While the house in St. James' Square, bought by the Earl for her permanent occupation, was being embellished, his Dublin house, newly decorated from top to bottom, sent out its invitations to what seemed a mere evening party, no news of the marriage having been encouraged. But when the company was assembled, the drawing-room doors were flung open and Lord Blessington entered with his beautiful wife in full bridal costume on his arm. Whatever she thought of this piece of theatricality, in a scene so difficult for her, she left unsaid.

From this on, Lady Blessington's history leans out into a panorama of social, literary and political history too dazzling even for time to bear, perhaps; certainly it was too much for her rivals, who labored not without success toward their share in her ultimate fall. She was a woman comparatively poor, that day in Paris, June, 1849, when, soon after her London departure and after a few hours of pain, she died in Count D'Orsay's arms.

With regard to D'Orsay, the dandy of his epoch, spoiled, admired, everywhere mentioned in the memoirs, letters and histories, Mr. Sadleir has a theory not unlike that he premises for Lady Blessington's sexual constitution. For them both his interpretation, it seems to me, makes sense. The account of D'Orsay extends, as his life did, beyond the death of Lady Blessington, and is excellently done all through.

The proofs of Lady Blessington's genius, her cultivation, tact, brilliance and powers of loyalty, are plentiful enough. Many of the leading men of her time sought her society and have left records of their profound admiration and delight. Of her writings the book that has survived is "The Journal of Conversations with Lord Byron." I am aware how often they have said of this book that she made it up and that the Byron of it was her own invention and effrontery. Mr. Sadleir, however, agrees with the more recent students of Byron in the matter of its, by and large, authenticity. I have known this book a long time, reading it with an almost startled recognition of its flexible comprehension and brilliant acumen. And I have never been able to see how, to anyone who knows Byron's poetry, the many hundreds of his letters and, especially, the journal he kept at Ravenna, these records and opinions quoted as Byron's could fail to seem his, and to be among the most valuable and convincing comments we have of him. The alternative to an acceptance of such authenticity is the admission of a prodigious gift on Lady Blessington's part of insight, penetration and creative grasp. It is all the better to have Mr. Sadleir's quotation from P. G. Patmore: "The printed 'Conversations' *with* Byron, characteristic as they are both of him and herself, are flat and spiritless—or rather marrowless—compared with Lady Blessington's own *viva voce* conversations of him, one half-hour of which contained more pith and substance than the whole octavo volume." A history of Lady Blessington is a history of much else.

STARK YOUNG.

Ozep and Walt Disney

RECENTLY I have been sidling into several picture houses, though with some hesitation. So many movies come to the arty places now, dressed gravely up in a reputation for being studies in something or other—montage, for example—that a person gets a little scared.

"Mirages de Paris," a French film now dialogued in English, carries some such recommendation, and purports to be dangerously satirical to boot. But don't be afraid: go see it if the chance affords—it is now at the Acme Theatre in New York City. It is a lively, fetching sort of thing. You will laugh; you will want to whistle with the orchestra; you may even (how old are you?) get tricked into believing the striking camera work to be fine art. Some of it really is fine, I think, though there is a certain tendency on the part of the director, Fedor Ozep, to play with the medium, to be taking his shirt off so you can see him bunch up his muscle. On the average he is alert, can suggest variously, and in general make you feel that you are feeling what he intends you to—anyway, that is the idea.

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I wish I could say that he captures Paris, but I have not been to Paris. He captures something, say the city. Well, he captures this city and then he throws down over it one of the shaggiest old plots you ever saw, and crowds crowd, and dangerous people break into places, and police blow whistles and fall over their flat feet considerably, and in the end round up the wrong types, and there are many other things. You see some rather antique shots of traffic and electric signs and garret windows, and some rather lovely play upon streets in the rain. You get good punctuation in the way of sound—especially a chorus of newsboys, very catchy, rollicking.

The plot itself brings an escaped boarding-school girl to the city, where she stores up enough trouble for herself to last the piece out by mistaking a smooth young theatrical chap for Tonnerre (the mighty actor, the voice of the hour). She becomes implicated in a robbery, in her own death by drowning, and lastly in a sinister hotel, where some true naturals take to her very kindly and propose to avenge her desertion by the imaginary Tonnerre. To this end they make several comical lunges in the direction of the real Tonnerre, and wind up by coming to the theatre and pelting him with refuse just as he is bowing and smirking in fatty pomp. Ultimately Tonnerre is arrested for the murder of the girl, who in turn is arrested for robbery —and when the smoke clears she fills the smooth chap's arms in the middle of a whopping stage set arranged to indicate her final triumph and the happy close.

Actually it is better than that, but no deeper, no more purposeful. The director has been content to let his wit and sensibility frisk it through an entertainment piece which is so well designed, so skillfully composite, that the whole runs off with a patter as smart as the language of its production. Rumors as to the presence in it of a recondite meaning probably arise from a tendency somewhere to confuse satire with incidental burlesque, and certainly apply to it no more truly than they would, say, to a Silly Symphony.

Mr. Walt Disney has had a dozen of his pictures rounded up for performance at Carnegie Hall (cf. Silly Symphony), where I sat through a group of seven and then in a manner forgot to get up and leave before sitting through two or three of them again. The charm which makes this possible, considering the rush people are in, is the main thing to be considered here; and yet so much unnecessary emphasis has been given to it recently as to make one draw back. It is such a simple thing. It is merely the charm of an imagination that can perceive all sorts of fantastic attitudes and action in things so common, so near to anyone's hand, that the sudden contrast of what they might be with what they certainly are not is universally droll, and not to be resisted. Add an uncanny eye for characteristic detail. Add a limitless invention, a happy choice of what seems the best medium for Mr. Disney's peculiar talents, its present perfection and the combination of it with sound. But his gifts, like a speaker I heard of once, need no introduction, having already endeared themselves to children and associate professors. They are restricted gifts, I suppose: what is astonishing about the man is that he can make an endlessly amusing operetta out of some old razor blades, a needle and a thread, and perhaps a few soft-shell crabs.

OTIS C. FERGUSON.

The Whitney Show

THE first of the Whitney biennial exhibitions of sculpture, watercolors and prints is far more impressive than the first biennial exposition of contemporary painting last year. It achieves a unity that the earlier show lacked and gives us something of a short perspective on the varied art that is being produced in America.

With all its minor conflicts and diversions, the present exhibit illustrates the two main streams in the existing American tradition. Although I am aware that I may be oversimplifying the character of two rival schools, I think that this is the moment to redefine those elements which have a precedent in Eakins at one extreme and in Ryder at the other. I believe there has been no figure in American painting comparable to Whitman or Emerson; that there has been no one with the ability to fuse the two contrasting virtues of Eakins and Ryder, and that there is still a split between what we call "realism" and "mysticism" in American art.

It so happens that the realistic school now seems to be in its ascendancy. Hopper, Sheeler, Criss, Grant Wood and Cox contribute work that swings the balance against the representatives of the opposing camp, in which John Marin still holds first place—though along with him we have such able men as Kuniyoshi and lesser known figures such as Jean Liberté, Max Weber and the Soyer brothers. With obvious exceptions this group bears the marks of a declining order. Here to the right, let us say, lies the work of those whose first impulse is toward a subjective lyricism; to the left we have the so-called realists who are interested in the concrete expression of what they have to say and will follow the perfection of detail back to the Flemish masters and from this point emerge into the contemporary world.

Both schools have been under a number of European influences—but the point I wish to make here is that these influences, whether from Cézanne, Picasso, the Far East or Surrealism, are now becoming a secondary matter. I believe that the difference between a Sheeler and a Kuniyoshi is essential, and that throughout the present exhibition there is a repetition of the gap that exists, let us say, between a Peter Blume and a Moses Soyer.

Sheeler's "Interior—Bucks County Barn" and Blume's "Elemosina" are among the most effective drawings in the entire black-and-white exhibit. These show the way in which the straws are blowing; again one sees the sharp line of division which separates a Grant Wood and a Max Weber. For our purpose Wood's "Dinner for Threshers" seems far more significant than a dozen Webers or even an exquisite Marin. For the same reason Criss's "Americana" and the two fine Hoppers command the entire entrance gallery; we are conscious of their importance here and now; and the satire of a Don Freeman or a Philip Reisman gathers momentum in this particular atmosphere. In realizing this it is well to remember that men like Sheeler and Hopper are not deficient in poetic insight, but that their poetry is strictly non-lyrical. If we ask for poetry in the traditional sense we must return to Marin or the youthful, somewhat melancholy lyricism of the Soyers.

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Of the sculpture displayed at this particular exhibit the less said the better. Few examples are downright bad or out of key, but it is clear that little fresh work is forthcoming and we must be content with an adroit Lachaise or a competent, rather sentimental Gershoy. One is glad to return to the watercolors for reassurance that American art is to be appreciated and that the two schools from which it derives its strength are unmistakably represented at the Whitney Museum. HORACE GREGORY.

CORRESPONDENCE

The President's Amnesty

SIR: Your readers may be interested to know, more precisely than news reports have shown, the significance of President Roosevelt's Christmas amnesty pardoning and restoring citizenship rights to 1,500 persons convicted under the Espionage Act or the conspiracy statute for opposing the War.

This action does not apply to conscientious objectors; refusal to fight was only a misdemeanor, and they lost no rights, save for a few charged with "desertion." Only those convicted of felonies receive pardons. Many of them served no time in prison, being fined or getting suspended sentences. Such convictions in most states barred those affected from voting, holding office, serving on juries, and obtaining licenses. Scores of instances of this have arisen. Now if any of those convicted are challenged, they have only to write to the Department of Justice for a copy of the President's proclamation, which wipes out their convictions.

ROGER N. BALDWIN,
Director, American Civil Liberties Union.

New York City.

The Writers' League vs. Pegler

SIR: In commenting on the recent unpleasantness between the Writers' League Against Lynching and The New York World-Telegram, you remark, "It was finally explained that the motives of each party to the controversy had been misinterpreted by the other." Many of our members feel that this point will stand some elucidation. May I present, for your information and that of your readers, the chronology of the controversy?

On Wednesday, December 13, The World-Telegram published an article by its new columnist, Westbrook Pegler, in which he expressed approval of the San Jose lynching and, by implication, of lynching in general. That same evening the Executive Committee of the Writers' League Against Lynching voted to send to Mr. Roy Howard, president of the Scripps-Howard chain of papers to which The World-Telegram belongs, a telegram signed by all the members, protesting against Mr. Pegler's view. The telegram, which Mr. Howard received on Thursday morning the fourteenth, read as follows:

> We were astounded and outraged to read in The World-Telegram Westbrook Pegler's defense of lynching. We trust that this wire will appear in full with all signatures as a letter in all your papers in which the Pegler articles appeared, so that it may be clear to the American public that there are those in the writing profession who abhor Mr. Pegler's attitude on lynching.

On Thursday a Mr. Davis of The World-Telegram called me up and asked me where the writers who signed the telegram had met. I explained that there had been no time to call a general meting of the League, and that the Executive Committee had acted, in the conventional manner, for the other members. Secondly, he asked (saying he wished especially to get the point quite clear) whether the committee objected to the *printing* of Pegler's article. I explained, in language I thought a child might have understood, that we objected not to the *printing* but to the *sentiment* of the article; that of course Mr. Pegler had as much right to defend lynching as we to object to his attitude; and that we assumed Mr. Howard's contract with Mr. Pegler allowed Mr. Pegler complete freedom of expression, a right which it would never occur to any of us to question.

The next day—Friday, December 15—The World-Telegram ran an editorial defending its columnist's right to free speech, and a long news-story featuring statements from various members of the League, protesting that they were *not* opposed to free speech; mentioning my so-called "admission" that the Executive Committee had acted for the League members (but not my denial that we objected to the printing of the Pegler article); and giving all of the eighty-three signatures to the telegram—but not the telegram.

Just after I had seen the first edition of this story, a World-Telegram reporter called me up. In the course of our conversation I expressed my opinion of the way in which the matter was being handled. Some half-hour later he called again and said that the text of the telegram had been inadvertently omitted from the early editions of the paper, but would appear in later editions. In the three and five-o'clock editions, the telegram was included in the news-story.

What happened afterward is matter of public record. On Saturday The World-Telegram ran letters and telegrams from several members of the League, protesting against its confusion of the issues of free speech and lynching, and its attempts to discredit the Executive Committee. On Monday it published an editorial explaining that there had been a misunderstanding, and that the issue of free speech was not involved.

One more point. In its editorial of Monday, December 18, The World-Telegram said: "Admittedly the text of the authors' wire was none too clear and was possible of more than one interpretation." I don't know who made this admission, although I do know that I made our meaning unmistakably clear to The World-Telegram the day before it raised the issue of free speech. I may explain, however, that it never even occurred to the Executive Committee to include in its telegram a qualifying clause declaring that it was not against free speech. In the first place, a group of American writers would be the last people to attack a principle by which they live. In the second place, both the reputation of the Scripps-Howard chain for allowing its columnists complete freedom of expression and its editorial attitude against lynching are matters of universal knowledge. Had anyone questioned the members of the Executive Committee they would have answered that in telegraphing Mr. Howard as they did, they felt they were addressing a friend and ally who would be as ready to allow the League to express in his columns a view with which he happened to be in sympathy, as to allow Mr. Pegler expression of a view with which he was not in sympathy. The Executive Committee took free speech as simply a matter of course. Mr. Howard, unfortunately, did not.

SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE, Secretary,
New York City. The Writers' League Against Lynching.

To Save Ernst Torgler's Life

SIR: I have just received the following letter from Romain Rolland. Evidently it was written before the court rendered its verdict acquitting Torgler. That verdict was brought about, not so much by the force of the evidence—for the court had frequently shown that it was capable of entirely disregarding the evidence—but by the force of world protest against the murder of an innocent man. But Torgler is not yet free from the danger of being judicially murdered. He is likely to be tried for the crime of treason—even though recent dispatches from Germany indicate the new maneuver against him, namely, to spread rumors that he has suddenly turned Nazi.

One of the most effective means of procuring Torgler's release and that of the other defendants is to protest through the American Committee to Aid Victims of German Fascism, 870 Broadway, New York City. MALCOLM COWLEY.

[ENCLOSURE]

After having awkwardly displayed its chief charges against Dimitroff, Popoff and Taneff before the eyes of the world, the

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prosecution was forced to retreat by the self-evident imposture of its own statements, by the falseness of the evidence and the flagrant perjury of its alibis. Even the imperial prosecutor had to recognize that these men were innocent. But the impudent malice of the prosecution, as exhaled in the furious invective of Göring, the Cabinet Minister, is seeking its revenge by delivering Torgler to the headsman.

Ernst Torgler, among all the defendants the most inoffensive—among all political militants the most pure in motive—the man whose whole life was disinterestedness and devotion—the man who in his party, by virtue of discipline and temperament, stood farthest from all individual violence—the most incapable of committing a stupid act of theatrical and useless terrorism like the burning of the Reichstag (an act which, in the midst of its flames, reveals the search for notoriety of a half-wit, evidently urged forward by the double-dealing of those who were plotting this Neronian farce)—the man who, strong in his innocence, did not hesitate even in the frenzy of the first hours, when spies and *agents provocateurs* were surrounding him, to come forward and deliver himself to the vengeance of his enemies, simply to defend the honor of his party—the man whom they held for seven months in prison and for five of those months in chains, while all the time they knew he was innocent—the man for whose head they are howling today, so as to throw it to the wolfish vengeance of those who, wishing to take Marxism in a trap, are caught in their own trap of false testimony and lies revealed to the world—Ernst Torgler, expiatory victim of the crime of his persecutors and of his own innocence, which permits them, by striking him, to strike not the man but the party! . . .

Crucify him then! If you dare to carry out this crime, you will give to the great party of the proletariat the bloody standard and the symbol of an innocent victim, under the sign of which it will march to victory!

ROMAN ROLLAND.

W. H. Auden's Politics

SIR: You owe your readers a correction of Mr. Isidor Schneider's review of "The Orators," by W. H. Auden. The book was coupled with Louis Aragon's "Red Front." It was called "an exhilarating revolutionary oration." Mr. Auden's pen was mentioned as a "keen weapon" of "the revolution"; and Mr. Schneider astonishingly affirmed that Mr. Auden had joined the Communist party. Mr. Auden has never been a member of the Communist party. He is not a Communist. I should describe him, if a label is required, as a strong individualist, tending towards a mysticism not at all defined.

Had Mr. Schneider not bothered so hard to tattoo Mr. Auden with the Hammer and Sickle, he might have had more room for examining his remarkable dramatic poem. Twenty-four lines, several of them inaccurate, is mean for a work wrongly or rightly looked upon by many in England as the most prominent since "The Waste Land."

London, England. GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

P.S. Mr. Schneider says that "The Orators" has been blessed by the Poet Laureate. Where and when? For us in England it would be interesting to know.

SIR: The reference, "an exhilarating revolutionary oration," was to a poem subsequently published in The New Republic, not to the poems in "The Orators." I heard from what I thought was a trustworthy source that Mr. Auden was a member of the British Communist party; I deeply regret the mistake. The praise of Mr. Auden by Mr. Masefield, the Poet Laureate, was contained in an interview given to the press on his recent American visit.

Long Island City, N. Y. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

For the Relief of German Children

SIR: The attention of your readers is directed to the campaign at present being waged by the American Committee for the Relief of Victimized German Children, of which Miss Fannie Hurst is chairman, and whose offices are located at 551 Fifth Avenue, New York.

This Committee has as its definite objective the helping of thousands of children of German refugees who are facing the hardships of winter in France, Holland, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. The Lord Marley Committee, with which we are in actual coöperation, has established children's homes in the countries just mentioned for the purpose of feeding, sheltering and educating the youthful innocent victims of Hitlerite barbarism.

We have pledged ourselves to raise $50,000 for this cause, which deserves the support and coöperation of every enlightened and progressive American.

I. S. RICHTER,
Campaign Director.

New York City.

Friedrich Engels on Propaganda

SIR: A new volume of letters by Marx and Engels was recently published in Moscow. In a letter by Engels, written in 1885 and addressed to Minna Kautsky, an Austro-German novelist, he criticizes one of her characters as suffering from idealization and lacking in individualization. He is "by no means opposed to tendencious poetry" in general. Aeschylus and Aristophanes, Dante and Cervantes were strongly tendencious in their poetry. So are the modern Russians and Norwegians in their excellent novels. "But I think the tendency must be implicit in the situation and the action," and it is not the function of the poet to furnish a solution of the social conflicts, which lies in the future. He adds that the tendencious novel fulfills its purpose when it gives a true picture of the real conditions. It thereby destroys conventional illusions, shakes the optimism of bourgeois circles, awakens a doubt in the eternal value of things as they are, even if it offers no way out, yes, even if it does not openly take sides.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

New York City.

Extracts from Letters

MR. R. G. SNODGRASS of Los Angeles sends us the following definition of Americanism, which, as he says, "wormed its way into the most ruggedly individualistic paper in California, The Los Angeles Times": "Suffering because of the greed and selfishness of big business; basing recovery plans on the hope that big business will be unselfish."

C. F. Kloss of New York City writes that, "The government is providing numerous jobs for the young and strong, but there are mighty few for the man advanced in age, and numerous code regulations make private employers loath to hire those not meeting high requirements in strength and efficiency. . . . This is equally true of the Negro, cripples and of all those who may be classed as below normal in their physical and mental equipment, but these are the very ones who make up the vast majority of those now idle."

Mr. B. H. Hibbard of the Department of Agriculture Economics, University of Wisconsin, takes partial issue with a statement in The New Republic of November 22 that the low price of agricultural commodities forces farmers to attempt to maintain a high output. He concedes that the individual farmer will desire to do so, but adds, "As the years go by, should prices remain low . . . lack of income will result in hiring less help, buying less fertilizer and equipment, all of which will mean eventually, should disastrously low prices continue, that the total output will sag very decidedly."

The Workers' School of Columbus, Ohio, writes us that it is opening a general educational center for the unemployed at 214 East Rich Street, Columbus. "Along with field activities such as relief, strikes . . . and many other problems, the unemployed are asking for educational classes from the labor point of view. Local friends and sympathizers are donating furnishings, but books, newspapers and magazines are difficult to get. We ask your readers to help us in this enterprise by contributing books to build up a workers' library."

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Fraught with Freight

IN THIS selection of essays by Thomas Mann,[1] who is now among those German writers honored by exile, there is a brooding quality, almost a moroseness. It may be in part explainable by the fact that many of the chapters are written "in commemoration" of one dead titan or another—such as Dürer, Lessing, Goethe, Wagner, Tolstoy, Nietzsche—but the sepulchral tone arises also from Mann's general attitude towards life. His patience can seem too great, his sympathies stretched too far beyond the range of biologic service. A cult of suffering, or heroism, or esthetic and scientific "saintliness," lurks about the fringes of his doctrines, to dismay us as to the gravity of living. At times his work suggests to me, not a personality, but a battlefield, an expanse of suffering soil across which the fluctuant and indeterminate conflicts of our day are waged momentously. There is a trampling back and forth, a complexity of veerings and deployings; there is even bewildering vagueness of position whereby men unknowingly fire upon their own comrades; and there are strange lulls which make us almost cry out for the quick resumption of combat and disorder.

The present essays, written during recent years in which conditions have shifted from day to day, are hardly to be judged by the tests of strict ideological consistency. Throughout his career, Mann's work has remained remarkably of one piece, as regards the issues at which he points. But his ways of pointing have been so changeable that one could conceivably play them against one another until they were canceled off to zero. He has even written a defense of this ambiguity: "The intellect should be objective enough to admit that it makes no difference whether a perception is positive or negative in sense, provided it is a perception and a true one." If I understand this remark, Mann does not mean simply that affirmations and negations, or the "constructive" and "destructive," are integrally related. He means rather that were we to say either "I am decidedly a patriot" or "I am decidedly not a patriot" we should be pointing at the same "perception," since in either case we should be making the same issue paramount. Perhaps it is only in this mercurial sense that Mann's critical formulations can be said to possess consistency. He will usually be found at one date advocating as an ideal the very trend or attitude which at another date he will ally with disaster. How eloquently, for instance, he warns the Nazis that they are choosing the way of darkness, of retreat into the primeval womb—and yet how eloquently, on other pages of this same book, he praises the cult of darkness.

One must know Mann well not to be confused by such uncertain tactics, the tendency to use as bogeyman this year the very thing which he had fondly saluted the year before. In a very thorough and discerning essay published in a recent issue of The Sewanee Review, Mr. Harry Slochower has discussed other aspects of this same phenomenon, showing how earnestly Mann has sought to cast overboard all parts of his vast intellectual equipment which are not suited for the demands of the hour, yet how, once the decision has been programatically taken, he smuggles back part by part all that he had scrapped. One can know for a certainty that when the final choice comes, Mann will always choose on the side of justice, and against the side of bigotry and oppression. But others must force the choice upon him. Left to his own devices, he falls into what Mr. Slochower has called the "bottomless pit of indiscriminate sympathizing."

Mann has written much in the imaginative sphere to make us realize the origins of this duality. He has pictured for us, again and again, the attempt to bid farewell to an older scheme of living and salute a new one, the somewhat prophetic hankering after a "third kingdom" which will restore to us our right to love the world. This typically nineteenth-century pattern of experience leads him to convert nearly everything he touches into a project for the merging of antitheses. This way of seeing is often very suggestive, yet I suspect that in the end Mann has been betrayed by it. Particularly as sharpened by the genius of Nietzsche, it leads to the formulation of false alternatives, and hence false syntheses. Though he himself has come to suspect this, his skill had been developed over too many years. He mentions, for instance, "the widespread, reigning, anti-idealistic and anti-intellectualistic determination to dispute the primacy of mind and reason, to pour scorn upon it as the most unfruitful of illusions, and to set the irrational and intuitive, the powers of darkness and the depths triumphantly in possession of their rights once more."

Does not Mann here deceive both himself and us most egregiously? Have we not, all about us, seen a world move toward confusion through too great an emphasis upon the intellect, the direct, rationalistic, irreligious, "enlightened," "go-getting" type of mind that moves with the sureness of an adding machine? And yet, by Mann's arrangement, were we to repudiate this ideal, we find ourselves hankering after nothing less than some dismal alliance with the darkest of primeval heavings. Having given us a choice between "day" and "night," and having allied the mind with day and the emotions with night, he makes it almost impossible to contemplate some check upon the mind without feeling that we are thereby dedicated to a cult of morbidness. What, indeed, has become of that central region, so swiftly spirited away by this sharp antithesis: the realm of the sentiments, of the gentle and warming affections, kindliness, friendliness, good nature, charity, good will? Is that the "night"—or is it not rather the only sort of "day" that man is entitled to idealize and to materialize? Is not our rising distrust of "mind" based purely upon the fact that power and knowledge have too far outpaced their counterpart in humane gratifications? Surely, the pleasing dispositions by which a social group promotes its coöperative tasks are not exactly "intellectualistic," nor are they by any means a reversion to the "powers of darkness and the depths." They must be known by their own rights, and not by the "merging" of "pure" mind and "pure" passion. They are qualitatively distinct—and if they are not kept so, the well founded distrust of "brain" can easily lead to a cult of dumbly obedient "brawn" that is indeed wholly allied with "darkness and the depths." From a region now given to such alliances, Mann has the distinction of being in exile.

KENNETH BURKE.

[1] Past Masters, by Thomas Mann. Translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 276 pages. $2.50.

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A Million Expatriates

The Homesick Million: Russia-out-of-Russia, by W. Chapin Huntington. Boston: The Stratford Company. 307 pages. $3.

The End of Our Time, by Nicholas Berdyaev. Translated by Donald Atwater. New York: Sheed and Ward. 258 pages. $2.25.

First to Go Back: An Aristocrat in Soviet Russia, by Irina Skariatina. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 316 pages. $2.75.

THE WHITE exodus from Soviet Russia started in November, 1917, and lasted until March, 1921, *i. e.*, until the end of the Civil War and the adoption of the New Economic Policy, the NEP. At first the refugees were certain that their exile would be brief; Bolshevism, they thought, was too preposterous to last. Ten years have passed since then. Hope for an immediate return to the homeland has been gradually waning. The émigrés have been settling down, taking jobs, adjusting themselves. Former colonels are serving as doormen, officers are becoming taxi-drivers, ladies of noble birth take jobs as fashion experts. The émigrés, like their relatives in the U.S.S.R., but for different reasons, are in the process of being proletarianized, economically if not psychologically.

Though hope for an immediate return is fading, intense longing to go back persists. Nostalgia pervades the émigré's entire life, art, school, indeed, his very diet, which is always Russian. For most of the émigrés the present does not exist; only the past, or a future which is the exact replica of the past. With what eagerness they scan the Soviet press for signs of an approaching collapse! With what credulity they swallow every anti-Soviet rumor! The thinnest cloud on the international horizon throws them into paroxysms of expectancy. The thing is pathetic—a million yearning souls engaged in a game of make-believe. Grand Duke Cyril, surrounded by a fantastic group of die-hards, plays the role of emperor, graciously bestowing titles, making tall promises and going through all the gestures of a real potentate. The rest of them lead imaginary armies, fight for an imaginary Russia, make imaginary pogroms, slay imaginary Bolsheviks.

Most of the émigrés seek solace in religion; yet even here, as in their politics, there is no reality and no unity—schisms, squabbles, bickerings, over nothing, over trifles. Mr. Huntington assures us, however, that "while outward unity and material power seem thus sadly to be going, there is developing a counter-movement from within, which may one day more than compensate for the loss." His hope is based on the work of the brilliant group of Russians gathered about the St. Sergius Theological Seminary in Paris, among whose guiding spirits is the famous religious philosopher and former socialist Nicholas Berdyaev, author of "The End of Our Time."

I shall not attempt fully to discuss the rising school of émigré thought represented by Berdyaev, but shall confine myself to those phases of his philosophy which have a direct bearing on the Russian Revolution. According to this thinker, "those who see in Bolshevism only the external violence of a band of robbers preying on the people have formed a superficial and wrong conception." Bolshevism is much more terrible. It reflects the "tendency to wickedness" inherent in all Russians; it displays outwardly the "inward crises," the "loss of faith," the "hideous weakening of the moral life" of the Russian people. In such a moral and historical atmosphere, no other power except Bolshevism could possibly have survived. Bolshevism was simply "a bloody reaction against the evil of the past; it was predestined and ineluctable." In short, God allowed the Bolsheviks to assume authority in order to punish the Russian people: "this is why Bolshevik power possesses a mysterious strength which they themselves cannot understand." Furthermore, this bloody nightmare of Bolshevism will never be disposed of by any army, however large and well organized. The revolution will destroy itself. By a sort of pathological process, society begets within itself forces—different from those in power before and during the revolution—which eventually "free it from its own devils." It is, therefore, not the émigrés, but forces within the U.S.S.R., which he predicts will finally destroy Bolshevism.

What, then, is the function of the Russians outside of Russia? Mainly, urges Berdyaev, to improve themselves spiritually, to banish all hatred from their hearts, to turn to God, and to wait. Thus stripped of its mystical verbiage and pious hopes for a new middle age and a theocratic society, Berdyaev's philosophical rationalization of passivity appears rather sensible. In view of the tremendous industrial and cultural and military progress of the U.S.S.R., what else is there left to do but to be resigned and hope for God's kind intervention?

But the emigration, like the Revolution itself, has had its "renegades." As far back as 1921, there appeared for a little while the "change-of-landmarks" movement, which urged reconciliation with the Bolsheviks on the basis of the latter's alleged nationalism. One of the most prominent converts at that time was the novelist, Count Alexey Nikolaievich Tolstoy. In the words of Prince D. S. Mirsky, however, "Tolstoy's change-of-landmarks had no effect on the émigré circles, for his moral and intellectual reputation had never stood high, and no one had ever taken his conduct seriously." This sarcastic comment was written in London in 1926. In November, 1932, the writer of these lines had the piquant pleasure of meeting Prince Mirsky in Moscow, himself a Bolshevik now, an exponent of Marxism-Leninism, and a vehement supporter of the workers' government.

Another émigré, not a Communist, one could see in Moscow during the November, 1932, celebrations was the charming, expansive and generous Countess Irina Wladimirovna Keller, better known in this country as Irina Skariatina. It was a delight to watch her thrill perpetually to the great progress she found in her country. Her "First to Go Back" is a warm, readable and, in spots, a bit sentimental account of her last year's visit. Quite informative, this book is on the whole more important for what it reveals of the psychology of the finer type of émigré than for the picture it gives of the Soviet Union. The last paragraph in her Preface is a key to the broad spirit which animates the book:

> Old Russia to me is like a beautiful dream that I shall never forget, for the years of my childhood and early youth were particularly happy. And for all its surviving members I have only the deepest of feeling and devotion to everything they hold dear in our past. But the Russia we knew is gone and I find it impossible to live only in that past and as time goes on and new changes take place I hope to be always able to understand them and be part of the life of my country. I am happy that I went back, happy that I have been with my people, happy that I can return again, and that I am no longer an exile.

JOSHUA KUNITZ.

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Socializing Insurance

Standards of Unemployment Insurance, by Paul H. Douglas. The University of Chicago Press. 265 pages. $3.

FOR NEARLY a decade this country has witnessed a vile campaign for the deliberate misrepresentation of the British system of unemployment insurance. In view of such opposition and misunderstanding, it was perhaps natural that some advocates of unemployment insurance should try to overcome these obstacles by proposing a plan which, in the beginning at least, would be more concerned with assuring employers and the public that their interests would be protected and their liabilities limited than with providing real security for the unemployed. To make this plan more palatable, it has been draped with the flag and dubbed "The American Plan for Unemployment Reserves."

As the depression deepened, those American students whose conceptions of the fundamental principles of social insurance have not been blurred by the opposition have been pointing out the total inadequacy of such plans, including that enacted in Wisconsin, and have urged the necessity of a realistic approach to both the problems of unemployment and unemployment insurance. Foremost in this clear-sighted group stands Professor Paul H. Douglas, who in his "Standards of Unemployment Insurance" presents one of the most concise and intelligent discussions of the entire problem. Although the chances are slim for obtaining adequate unemployment-insurance legislation in the near future, especially since the oncoming of the N.R.A., the time for legislative proposals and debate is definitely here. And Professor Douglas' analysis of what is right and what is wrong in unemployment insurance is not only thorough, invaluable and timely, but almost flawlessly correct in every regard.

Understanding the difference between social insurance and private insurance, he is not afraid of violating the principles of an actuarially sound private-insurance scheme "which it is urged should aim at stabilizing individual incomes irrespective of relative needs." He regards the solidarity of society to be such "that greater relative protection may be properly given to those in the greatest relative need." He insists that without a pooling of risks, which the Wisconsin law neglects, there can be no insurance. He realistically contends that present economic conditions necessitate the blending of unemployment insurance with self-respecting relief. He believes that both the state and the federal governments should contribute to unemployment insurance through taxes on incomes and inheritances, so that the burden can be shared even by those who, although not direct participants in industry, are nevertheless well able to help to bear it. He insists that the chief aim of an unemployment-insurance system should be to assure an income to the unemployed rather than to stabilize industry. He correctly points out that American business management is not so ignorant of its job as not to know that regularization of production reduces costs. If, despite this incentive, it has not achieved regularization, a small penalty of 2 percent or even 3 percent of pay rolls by way of unemployment-insurance premiums will not make it do so.

Professor Douglas' book is indispensable to every legislator and student of the problem. To be at all acceptable, an unemployment-insurance bill must embody at least 90 percent of the principles he lays down.

ABRAHAM EPSTEIN.

Baudelaire as Rebel

Baudelaire, by Enid Starkie. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 518 pages. $3.75.

ENID STARKIE has written what is in some respects an excellent biography. But she has a thesis and one that cannot be accepted after an objective analysis. Like Charles Du Bos, T. S. Eliot and others, she attempts to explain Baudelaire's life and work as essentially and innately Christian. T. S. Eliot has stated it definitely: "The important fact about Baudelaire is that he was essentially a Christian . . . a soul that was *naturaliter* Christian." But the attempt to evaluate Baudelaire as a poet whose work was founded on Christian principles must overlook, disregard or mask so many significant features of Baudelaire's life and poetry that it can be explained only as an attempt on the part of conservative critics to seize Baudelaire for their own, to emphasize certain aspects of his work in the interests of the followers of reaction. Such an evaluation must neglect or minimize, for example, the influence of the St. Simonian labor movement and the events of the crucial year 1848 on the character and writings of Baudelaire.

As a counter-interpretation to that of Miss Starkie, Du Bos, Eliot, *et al,* this is submitted: the most significant aspects of Baudelaire's life and poetry were at once an expression and a symptom of the advance of realistic values in revolt against the hypocritical optimism and morality of the romantic bourgeois. Baudelaire's satanism was a symptom of this advance in the moral sphere. The June revolt of 1848, in which Baudelaire participated, was the political symptom. For this interpretation, even Miss Starkie's biography furnishes a wealth of evidence.

First the revolt. For Baudelaire, it provided an external stimulus which temporarily destroyed the vicious circle of his feelings and released him from the emotional dead-center of an idle neurotic, the desire for action and condition of apathy, the struggle between "the horror of living and the ecstasy of living." During the revolt, Baudelaire was in a continuous state of excitement and more and more in harmony with his world. He was in full sympathy with his revolutionary companions. In contrast with his former luxury, he too had felt the terrible, degrading effects of poverty, and in common with the revolutionaries, he hated bourgeois society. The revolt was an external factor; it socialized Baudelaire's introspective and individualistic life. It was not the personal revolt of a social misfit, as pseudo-psychologists would have it; Baudelaire's honesty, sensitivity and artistry cannot be dismissed with terms like misfit or abnormal. What is really misfit and misplaced is, to employ his own words, the artist in "a money-grubbing commercial society opposed to all forms of art," the artist who is a member of a ruthless class—*"une canaille bourgeoise"*—which refuses to understand him, evaluates him in its own greasy coinage, and utilizes and distorts his talent by misdirecting and finally destroying it.

As a poverty-stricken outcast, Baudelaire shared with an oppressed world experiences which matured and broadened his outlook from a youthful egotism and sensuality to a social, humanitarian point of view. His poetry acquired a humane, bitter and rebellious note. Though Miss Starkie declares that "the real qualities in Baudelaire's verse come chiefly from his spiritual view of art," she admits that his poems of the poor are his profoundest poems.

Certainly, that which distinguishes Baudelaire's poetry from the characteristic verse of contemporaries like Gautier and d'Aurévilly is a realistic, plebeian quality ranging from

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Byronic revolt to a democratic, Christlike humanitarianism. It is the identity of the artist with vital and material social forces, which enrich and fulfill his personality. Conversely, it is his later alienation from these forces which impoverishes and slowly vitiates his character and work.

After the revolution was suppressed and Louis Bonaparte seized power, Baudelaire became disgusted with politics and public life and sought "consolation in the arts." His hopes were shattered, the class with which he had discovered rebellious sympathies was crushed, and he fled to a life of chambers of reverie, of intoxicants and spiritual drugs. His revolt was an individual counter-revolt against the whole of society. The old apathy, the nostalgia and pessimism returned and increased and darkened his life. His poems became expressions of his failure to resolve the life around him with his own life, with his philosophy and esthetic standards. To some extent his passion for art and his integrity as an artist sustained him in his struggle and gave him moral fiber. When at last he became disillusioned with his art, religion was the last phial of laudanum. The dreamer became a victim of his dreams, a fate Baudelaire was well aware of and feared; the flight from reality ended in the arms of reaction.

The tragedy of Baudelaire is also the minor tragedy of those modern talents who, isolating themselves from that class interest which is also in the interest of humanity as a whole, are unable to resolve their idealistic dilemmas, and end their careers in spiritual suicide or in the arms of the church.

S. FUNAROFF.

The Last Great Romantic

Pilgrim of the Apocalypse: A Critical Study of D. H. Lawrence, by Horace Gregory. New York: The Viking Press. 125 pages. $1.

ACCORDING to Horace Gregory, D. H. Lawrence was essentially not a novelist but a romantic poet, the descendant not of Thackeray and George Eliot but of Blake and Shelley. His successive productions, therefore, he treats rather as successive attempts at the solution of personal problems than as increasingly adequate accounts of the world of objects. The distinction is not absolute, of course, and Mr. Gregory does not write as if it were, but he is certainly justified in laying the emphasis where he does. Lawrence was an intrinsically great poet who, as it happened, wrote very few good poems; and he was a romantic of the romantics in a generation when, one would have said, the great battery of romanticism had irrecoverably run down. As a writer, he strikes one as habitually wrestling with obstinate difficulties, and often being thrown by them; but the spectacle is one of magnificent power, and Mr. Gregory writes of it with the kind of intimate understanding which perhaps only another poet could command.

His essay is full of suggestions, and, if it is a little disappointing, this is partly because Lawrence's turbidity, as well as Lawrence's ardor, has infected the manner of putting things, and party because Mr. Gregory tends to look at Lawrence rather from his own or a similar point of view than from a different and better one. Lawrence's true genius would not suffer at the hands of a criticism that rejected many of his premises and some of his conclusions. This is not Mr. Gregory's approach, and his essay has a certain inconclusiveness as a result; but it remains one of the best discussions of Lawrence.

NEWTON ARVIN.

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Books in Brief

Americana

THE LOG OF THE BETSY ANN, by Frederick Way, Jr. *New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. 293 pages. $2.75.*

Very tall, the "Betsy Ann" had so slight a draft that she could be floated over shoals on the suds of a keg of beer. She was a racer by training and instinct, fast, willful and gallant; she had been built by an old-school riverman who owned a fleet of steamers on the Mississippi. It was her good luck a few years ago to become the possession of Frederick Way, who not only kept her in the style to which she was accustomed in the matter of paint and polish, but let her revive the historic art of steamboat racing on the Ohio, even though she was carrying cows and crates of eggs, ironware and wooden posts. In a skylarking narrative Captain Way has recreated his boat as a substantial character, and has evoked sights, smells and water noises with such ardor as to make anyone who knows the Western rivers pine for steamboating days. The book is full of delightful photographic prints.

Memoirs

SLANTING LINES OF STEEL, by Colonel E. Alexander Powell. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 307 pages. $2.50.*

"The greatest news story in the history of journalism 'broke' on the second of August, 1914."—"I have found that, generally speaking, one can get almost anywhere provided he has sufficient effrontery and impressiveness."—"She had heard a rumor that Brussels was to be sacked and burned and wanted to write an eye-witness story about it for her paper. When she turned a deaf, pink-coral ear to Van Hee's pleadings that the war zone was no place for a young and pretty woman. . . . "—"They [certain war correspondents] were always afraid that someone else would steal the show."—"What a pity, I thought, that the sleek smug politicians who were responsible for all this ghastly business could not have been there in their stead." (But when Mr. Powell tells of meeting any of these sleek smug politicians, he paints the most complimentary portraits; and he extended his fullest collaboration to them as lecturer, war correspondent and intelligence-service expert in America.) "As the expense of manufacturing a 77 mm. shell amounts to at least $25 it will be seen that it cost the Germans upward of $300,000 to wound ten French soldiers. No other form of business could be run with such extravagance and succeed." These excerpts will serve to give the author's point of view. The famous war correspondent is a first-class reporter. In spite of his insensitiveness and lack of historical understanding he writes narrative effectively—but even today, nineteen years afterward, he still doesn't know what it was all about.

World Affairs

NATIONALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION, by Hans Kohn. *New York: Columbia University Press. 164 pages. $2.50.*

There are 185 peoples in the Soviet Union, speaking 147 languages, united in a Federation of Socialist Republics from which any Republic may at any time secede—a right declared inviolable in the Constitution. The problems arising from these different nationalities have proved to be among the most intricate the Communists have had to face. This brief book is largely a review of the line they have followed, illustrating the significance of Pan-Russian chauvinism and local nationalism, which are the two principal deviations, the religious problem, and the policy of the Comintern toward the colonial question and allied points of controversy. The policy is best expressed by Stalin's phrase: "The period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the building up of Socialism in the Soviet Union is the period of the flowering of the national civilizations, which while intrinsically Socialist are national in form." The author's exposition is generally clear, and with the valuable appendix illuminates a question which has been a source of much confusion. His contrast between Communism and religion, though well phrased and better informed than such attempts usually are, deals with a subject too large to be fully expressed in the short space given it.

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SOVIET ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE EAST, by Violet Conolly. *New York: Oxford University Press. 168 pages. $2.25.*

This booklet studies Soviet trade relations with Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Sin Kiang and Tana Tuva, and traces the evolution of Soviet policy from the early period "when favorable trade balances were declared to be unnecessary in Eastern trade" to the present period in which "profit and not sentiment" is becoming everywhere the basis of Soviet economic policy. On the whole, Soviet commercial efforts in the East have been eminently successful, and exports have been steadily growing in volume and changing in character—from agricultural to manufactured products. Russia's geographic position and the growth of her industries at a moment when the peoples of Asia are beginning to organize their countries on modern industrial lines are propitious factors for the further successful development of Soviet Eastern trade. The author foresees a clash among Russian, Chinese and Japanese interests; the only way a conflagration may be averted, she believes, is "by the presence of a really strong Russia."

COURTS AND JUDGES IN FRANCE, GERMANY AND ENGLAND, by R. C. K. Ensor. *New York: Oxford University Press. 144 pages. $2.*

This is a brief and clear analysis of the judicial systems of France and Germany as compared with that of England. The author is writing primarily to enlighten British law students, but his book will be of interest to all those concerned with the functioning of the law.

Fiction

BROKEN ARROW, by Robert Gessner. *New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.*

Robert Gessner has lived on a reservation, and has previously published "Massacre," a sociological study of Indian life. His first novel tells the tragic story of Levi Horse-Afraid, a proud Sioux boy of the Dakota Bad Lands. Levi's tragedy lies in his having neither entirely broken away from the traditions of his own race nor oriented himself to the ways of the whites. At the Summer Rodeos, in which he participates victoriously, he is revolted equally by the spiritual degradation of his own people and the soulless commerciality of their exploiters. Many of his comrades are slaves of drink; he sees his sweetheart in a "beauty parade"; even the races are "fixed." Levi is forcibly placed in a government school where inhuman treatment breaks his health and spirit, leaving him, at the last, with only a great longing for death and that ancestral heaven he has seen in a peyote dream.

Contributors

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